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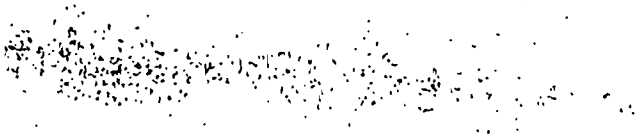


THE

SPEECHES

OF THE

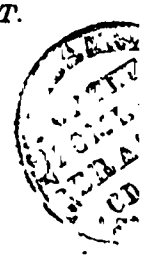
RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY GRATTAN,

IN THE IRISH,

AND

IN THE IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.



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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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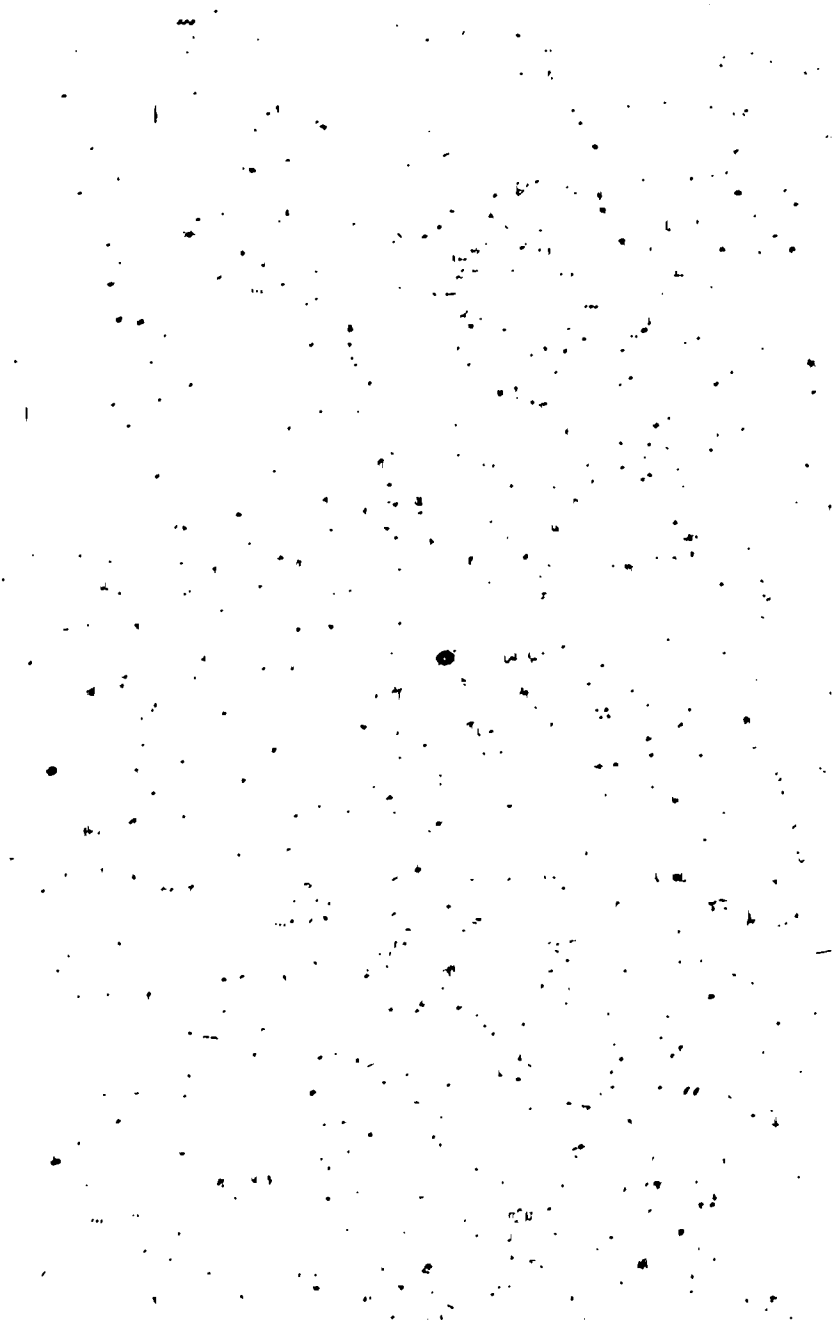

SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY GRATTAN,

&c. &c.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES AN AMENDMENT TO THE ADDRESS.

January 10. 1793.

ON this day the session commenced; and the Lord Lieutenant, seated on the throne, delivered to both Houses of Parliament the following Speech:—

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"I have his Majesty's commands to meet you in Parliament, and to express his satisfaction in resorting to your counsels in the present situation of affairs.

"His Majesty feels the utmost concern that various attempts should have been made to excite a spirit of discontent and disturbance, and that appearances should have manifested themselves in any part of this kingdom, of a design to effect by violence an alteration in the constitution.

"It is an additional ground of uneasiness to His Majesty, that views of conquest and dominion should have incited France to interfere with the government of other countries, and to adopt measures with regard to His Majesty's allies, the States General, neither conformable to the law of nations, nor the positive stipulations of existing treaties; especially when both His Majesty and the States General had observed the strictest neutrality with regard to the affairs of France.

"Under these circumstances, I have ordered, by His Majesty's commands, an augmentation of the forces upon this establishment.

"By the advice of the Privy Council, measures have been taken to prevent the exportation of corn, provisions, and naval stores, arms and ammunition. The circumstances which rendered these measures necessary, will, I trust, justify any temporary infringement of the laws, and will induce you to give them a parliamentary sanction.

"It will afford His Majesty the greatest satisfaction, if, by a temperate and firm conduct, the blessings of peace can be continued; but he feels assured of your zealous concurrence in his determination to provide for the security and interests of his dominions, and to fulfil those positive engagements to which he is equally bound by the honour of his Crown, and the general interests of the empire.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons;

"I have ordered the national accounts to be laid before you, and I have no doubt of your readiness to grant such supplies for the public service, as the honour and security of His Majesty's Crown and Government, and the exigencies of the times may require.

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"The agriculture, the manufactures, and particularly the linen manufacture, the Protestant charter-schools, and other public institutions, which have so repeatedly been the objects of your care, will, I doubt not, engage your accustomed regard and liberality.

"I am to recommend to you, in His Majesty's name, to adopt such measures as may be most adviseable for the maintenance of internal tranquillity, and for this purpose to render more effectual the law for establishing a militia in this kingdom.

"His Majesty has the fullest confidence that you will, on all occasions, show your firm determination to enforce due obedience to the laws, and to maintain the authority of Government, in which you may depend upon His Majesty's cordial co-operation and support; and I have it in particular command from His Majesty, to recommend it to you, to apply yourselves to the consideration of such measures as may be most likely to strengthen and cement a general union of sentiment among all classes and descriptions of His Majesty's subjects, in support of the established constitution: with this view, his Majesty trusts that the situation of His Majesty's Catholic subjects will engage your serious attention, and in the consideration of this subject he relies on the wisdom and liberality of his Parliament."

"I am truly sensible of the repeated testimonies which I have received of your approbation; and I will endeavour to merit a continuance of your good opinion, by strenuously exerting the power with which I am entrusted for the maintenance of our excellent constitution in church and state, as the best security for the liberty of the subject, and the prosperity of Ireland."

The Earl of Tyrone (son to the Marquis of Waterford) moved an address to His Majesty; it was in accordance with the speech. The motion was seconded by Mr. Arthur Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington); it was supported by Mr. J. O'Neill.

Mr. GRATTAN said, Our situation is certainly alarming, but by no means surprising; it is the necessary, natural, and obvious result of the conduct of his Majesty's ministers; the persons who had opposed our liberty in 1782, were made our ministers; afterwards the country forgave them, but they never forgave the country; they attempted to put down the constitution, and now they have put down the government. We told them so, we admonished them; we told them that their driving system would not do; we had no objection to their private characters, or their humble, natural relationships of life, but that they were absolutely, totally, radically disqualified to govern.

Do not they remember, that, in 1790, we warned them? They said we were severe — I am sure we were prophetic. Again, in 1791, we repeated our admonition; told them that a government of clerks would not do; that a government by rank majorities would not do; that the government of the treasury would not do; that Ireland would not be long governed by the trade of parliament. We mentioned this when Lord Buckingham ran away from this kingdom, and Lord Westmorland succeeded to his office. We told them that a nation who had rescued her liberties from the giant Old England, in 1782, would not long bear to be trodden on by the violence of a few pigmies whom the caprice of a court had appointed ministers.

I remember the beginning of the last session, I had the honour of submitting in this House some observations on this head; and my honourable friend also, in the course of the session, assured you that your system of government was infatuation; we have now to lament the effects of that infatuation; and though I allow foreign revolutions have had a certain effect on domestic discontent, yet the causes of that discontent were laid by ministers, who might have seen the state of foreign politics, and have foreseen the forcible influence of that state on domestic disorders. We are now, by a course of mal-administration, brought back to that condition of discontent and jealousy, which in 1782 produced an interposition from the King; we then laboured under the ill effects of a bad constitution — we now labour under the ill effects of a bad government.

The periodical sales of the House of Commons, the public declaration of those sales, the increase of twenty parliamentary provisions, and, what was more, the acknowledgment that such increase was a political expedient to buy the members; the repeated declarations that the best minister for Ireland

was he who bought the House of Commons cheapest; the sale of divers peerages for money, to be laid out by the minister in procuring for his followers seats in the House of Commons; the sale of the functions of one House, for buying votes in the other (it was the case of the barren land bill); the patronage of all kinds of abuses and peculations, as in the case of the police; the rejection of every constitutional bill; place bill, pension bill, responsibility bill, tending to assimilate our constitution to that of Great Britain; the arguments advanced for the rejection of the two former by a law officer of the crown, who said that the government in Ireland should be stronger than that of Great Britain, and who, in the application of that argument, could only mean that the Parliament of Ireland should be more abandoned. These things, and many more, taken separately or altogether, have totally and universally deprived of all weight, authority, or credit, the Parliament of Ireland.

I am sure our ministers meant to go no further, they only meant an attack on the constitution, but they have undermined the throne; it is impossible in a constitution with parts connected as ours to put down the authority of Parliament, without involving the monarchy; and while our ministers only intended to free the throne from the checks and limits of a Parliament, they have deprived it of its best support, the poise and authority of a parliamentary constitution.

I have heard of seditious publications of Mr. Paine, and other writers; these writings may be criminal, but it is the declarations of the ministers of the crown that have made them dangerous. Mr. Paine has said monarchy is a useless incumbrance; a minister of the crown comes forth and says he is right; monarchy cost this country, to buy the parliament, half a million at one period, and half a million at another. Mr. Paine has said an hereditary legislative nobility is an absurdity; our minister observes he has understated the evil; it is a body of legislators whose seats are sold by the ministers to purchase another body of legislators to vote against the people; but here is the difference between Mr. Paine and our authors; the latter are ministers, and their declaration evidence against their royal master. They say we love monarchy; we love the king's government, which, however, we must acknowledge, governs by selling one house and buying the other. So much more powerful agents of republicanism are the Irish ministers than such authors as Mr. Paine, that if the former wished to go into rebellion in 1793, as, in 1783, when some of them went into sedition, they could not excite the

people to high treason by stronger provocation than their own public declarations; and the strongest arguments against monarchical government, are those delivered by themselves in favour of their own administration.

There are two species of levellers—levellers of principles and levellers of institutions, and the former always make way for the latter; the latter is the death, and the former the disease, and both together form in political life the progress of sin and dissolution. That minister who sold the peerage was a leveller; that minister who publicly bought the House by the increase of about twenty, which is a difference of forty votes, was a leveller. He was a leveller of character, and authority, and principle, without which political institutions vanish. The French levellers destroyed the nobility and the throne, to erect the despotism of the people. The Irish levellers have endeavoured to destroy the power and credit of the nobility and the commons, to erect the despotism of the King; in that endeavour they have undermined the throne; they have stripped the King's government, together with the two Houses of Parliament, of all kind of credit, or authority, or weight, in the minds of the people of Ireland.

Permit me to consider the conduct of our ministers, in its particular reference to that oppressed part of His Majesty's subjects, the Catholics. I do not mean now to go into their claims. I retain my former conviction in their favour; but if I were their enemy, I could not approve of their treatment; our ministry begins by offering them a personal incivility, so they state in their published debate. I am not a judge of the fact, but they are of the impression. They were so critically and equivocally situated with respect to political and civil rank, that even courtesy from a lord lieutenant's secretary would have been a compliment, and slight is an insult; they are the only part of His Majesty's subjects so situated. The Catholics will soon be in that situation no longer; after offending the Catholics by manner, the next unadvised step of the ministry, was to attack them by artifice, and, accordingly, they endeavoured to detach and divide the landed interest of the Catholics from the body at large, which was an attempt to destroy the subordination of the common people, and to set population adrift from the influence of property; and lest there should remain still some influence over their minds, the ministry make some blind and imperfect overtures to the Catholic clergy, to detach them also from the claims of their flock, which was to detach their flocks from them, and to leave that flock entirely destitute of all principle whatsoever of subordination, either to landlord or ecclesiastic. I am not a

friend to superstition or subjugation, and yet there is a certain degree of moral influence which the pastor may safely have over his flock, and the landlord over his tenantry, without which I fear you would extinguish the soul of subordination; however, the minister endeavours to leave the Catholic, over whom the state cannot have by connection any ascendancy, free from any control or check, either of their church or their aristocracy; and it is a strong presumption in favour of that body, thus set adrift as it were by the design, that it recovered the principles of union, and has preserved the principles of subordination, and should have left its enemies without even a pretence to oppress them. The next impolitic step taken by our minister, was the institution of a paper war on the subject of religion; the declarations, as you will find in the Catholic report of the transaction, managed, procured, or sanctioned by government, led to counter declaration, and, finally, discussion, on the broad principle of philosophy, which ministry knew was against them, and in an appeal to the people, who from interest must have been against them likewise. The ministry embitter this paper war by its own rhetoricians and scribblers, and publish notoriously from the Castle such personal invectives against respectable Catholics, such contumelious stuff! You must recollect it, written, published, and spread by the Castle, against the pretensions and persons of the Catholic body; such invectives as must have roused the spirit of indignation as well as liberty, to vindicate their fame and fortunes against a scandalous and opprobrious government.

The next unfortunate error in this business was a declaration from a right honourable gentleman, high in confidence, that on a certain event government would suppress the Catholics with the force of both countries. I incline to believe the threat was unauthorised; nor do I pretend to say it was unconditional; it was on a certain event or supposition that these men committed something which government might call a great offence; but who had a right to suppose such a body of men would commit an act which will justify His Majesty's ministers, to levy war on so vast a portion of his people? a liege subject, living within the peace of the king, to suppose him a rebel in order to threaten him with arms, is to tell him he is not a subject, but a slave. Without discussing any further objections to such language, it is sufficient to say, that the direct and obvious tendency of such a menace was to make the Catholic body attribute to the successes of France that safety and privilege which should have appeared to proceed from benignity of the king, and the justice of par-

liament. I say the tendency of such a declaration; but the effect of it has been, I believe, only to manifest His Majesty's gracious and signal interposition in manifesting his paternal love to his loyal subjects, and affording them protection against his ministers.

The next unfortunate error of our ministry was their interference with grand juries against the Catholics, because they were giving to the Protestants false hopes, at the same time that they were exciting against the Catholics false fears. They took the lead in fomenting a religious war; they began it; they acted in the mongrel capacity of country gentlemen and ministers; they acted against Catholics as country gentlemen, and encouraged the Protestants as ministers. They had, I understand, informed the British ministry that the influence of the Crown could not induce a majority to vote against the Catholic pretensions, and then they themselves take a leading part to make that difficulty in the country, of which they complained of in their dispatches. To the country gentlemen they say, "will you bear that these men shall get the elective franchise," and to the British minister, "you see these country gentlemen;" and the consequences of this conduct is, that the Irish ministry become parties against the people, and have a personal and country interest to exclude them; not as Catholics, but as enemies.

Among other instances of the intolerance of ministers, is something of religious war in an address from the corporation of Dublin to the other corporations of the kingdom. I consider this publication as the act of the Castle; the act of their city delegation; the composition of their city agents. The city has been a long time the object of their mischief; whenever the city is left to herself, she will ever speak with moderation and propriety,—and her mistake in this address has been to have resigned her better understanding to the intrigues and interference of the Castle. I shall observe on this publication, so far as to say, that, according to the sentence it pronounces, the doom of the Catholic, in all times to come, is perpetual exclusion from the franchise of the constitution; and, according to the law that publication advances, the title of the Protestant to his lands and privileges, is the right of conquest. If then the three millions of Catholics should, with the assistance of twenty-six millions in France, rebel and dispossess you of your properties and charters, they have in the city publication an authority; they have the law of conquest; and they have your excuse for appealing to the law of conquest, because they have the sentence of the cor-

poration; nothing else to relieve them from the doom of slavery!

The result of this interposition of the Irish government in this religious war; the consequence of having poured their angry ingredients into the cup of religious fury, has been, that as far as relates to Irish government, they have totally lost the confidence of the Catholics; they have lost the confidence of one part of His Majesty's subjects by their corruption, and of the other, by their intolerance.

In such a situation of domestic discontent, and foreign revolution, what measures have they taken? One would naturally have thought they would have instantly resorted to one very obvious measure,—the assembling of Parliament. No; they prorogue it, and yet there are many reasons for calling it. The example of England was one; if there was reason to think French politics had made any progress in Great Britain, there was tenfold reason to fear they would make a progress in Ireland; because Ireland had tenfold her grievances. The minister of England had not proclaimed nor purchased Parliament; but there was another cause — the calling out the militia. Whenever His Majesty calls out the militia in England, he is obliged to call a Parliament: and here, though the law is not the same, the reason is stronger, because your militia without Parliament, is imperfect; for the jealousy of government in 1778 struck out in the privy council the compulsory clause. By the law of the land, you cannot arm Catholics; by the omission of the militia bill, you cannot compel Protestants; so, unless you called a Parliament, you might have a militia, but no men. So that, either the calling out the militia was unnecessary, or the proroguing Parliament essential to make that militia effectual, was improper. See the consequence! You try it in Waterford, it would not be received; you try it in Cork, the inhabitants, who appear a very sensible set of men, meet, consider, and decide, That, in offering the militia, government only means to resort to the old practice—patronage: and as to the execution of the laws, they conceive that they themselves are better qualified for that task than such a government; and they all suspect and repudiate your militia.

The police of the city of Dublin has taught men to be apprehensive of your militia, because you have, unfortunately, while you professed to mean the due execution of law, intended patronage, and protected violence: another reason for calling a Parliament, was the state of public credit; your funds had fallen, your credit had stopped, and the cause was

to be found in the unsettled state of the Catholic claims, only to be settled by Parliament. And how do ministers settle them, and restore public credit? By prorogation. Surely, the ministry cannot be pronounced innocent of that public distress, when they might have removed the cause by doing in November what will be done in January, and what had been a subject before them for near twelve months.

The state of the public mind was another cause. The nation had grievances; the Catholics you now allow, and apprehend, to have grievances; levellers, if such there be, whose principles in themselves are a grievance. You give them all time to form and unite, if they please, in one great mass, for Parliament, when at length it should meet, to decompound and analyse. Some part of the people our ministry had conceived to be republican; some part of our Catholics had been represented as affecting a popish congress, in imitation of a French republic; with this opinion of His Majesty's, it is somewhat astonishing, that they give two months' fair play to such imputed principles to act and form against the state; so, if the imputation was founded, the remedy, at the time you choose to call Parliament, had been too late.

You must have heard of French emissaries; if there was any danger of them you gave them also fair play; you left them also two months to taint the integrity of three-fourths of your island, and the present allegiance of that body, notwithstanding such opportunities, is a strong refutation of the charges of their enemies, who now, under the direction of the King, must do justice to that loyalty they had attempted to traduce and to proscribe.

There was another reason for calling Parliament, — a convention. Was it not an object, by a liberal and speedy settlement, to have anticipated the graces of concession, and to display the justice of Parliament, at a time when you were trembling at the unpopularity of Parliaments, and the prevalence of conventions? What was the cause of this neglect to call Parliament? you had not made up your minds on this question. In the summer, and with the grand juries, you had made up your mind very readily; and then you are to unmake it and form that mind a new one, and have a better. Thus you decide when you should deliberate, and deliberate when you should have decided; and, in the mean time, remain incapable either to give counsel, or to receive it. The effect of this neglect was like the other parts of your conduct; to discredit Parliament, it says, vote taxes, pass the revenue bill; but as to counsel, we will call for Mr. A. or

Mr. B., or even a clerk, to consult *de arduis regni;* any one but the hereditary council of the King, and the grand council of the nation.

You call a council, but it is the privy council; you sent, I understand, to some of the opposition; you were honest enough to make them responsible for getting you out of difficulties, into which, if you had followed their advice, you never had been precipitated; perhaps the best advice any friend could have given you, was to walk off, and turn to any trade except that of a minister; however, you get advice somewhere or other, and you take measures; what are they? a militia; but I believe that is a measure of no efficacy, for the reasons I have given already; you try government volunteers; but that is another measure on whose efficacy I do not suppose you rely much; if it has any great effect, it must revive the volunteers by example; if such a measure is necessary in government, it must be equally necessary for the people at large, and as a direct tendency to produce a general armament; you resorted to other measures, a proclamation, a militia, an increase of your troops, and an association; in the proclamation I acknowledge I see a milder language than we have been accustomed to hear of late years from the ministers of the crown. I do not go into the merits or objects of that proclamation now, but I must lament one word contained in it; "pretended grievances." Is the sale of peerage a pretended grievance? Is the creation of twenty new places as provision for members of parliament, to govern and direct their deliberation? Is the purchase of the House of Commons, or, in one sentence, the extinction of the use, credit, and authority of parliamentary institution, a pretended grievance? To rise in arms to redress grievance real or pretended, is, I apprehend, against law, but here the criminality of the act appears to be the pretence of the grievance; and the consequence of such expression would be naturally to direct the hopes of the people from government to themselves; it says, if you look for redress, you must not look to us, and a proclamation, therefore, so worded, though it may disperse, cannot pacify. The other means is association; the idea of supporting government by association is an appeal to the collective body of the people, and you make that appeal when three-fourths cannot be a part of that association, unless they associate against their own franchise: you must let them into the constitution before they associate to support it, and therefore the calling of parliament was a necessary preliminary to an association, instead of making an association previous to a parliament, and to those rights and privileges, whose preservation must be

the object of the associations, and whose creation has not yet taken place. I have no objection to an association, if monarchy is in danger, or even if there should be a doubt, I think it incumbent on every man to rally round the throne.

It is the felicity of these islands, that however we may require to reform abuses, we are not now to seek for a constitution. On the militia I have already observed; the augmentation of the army, I know precisely what it is; it may be very proper, it may be trifling, it may be illegal, but every measure necessary to order I will support.

We have a monarchy, the best form of government for rational and durable liberty; it is a fortunate circumstance attending that monarchy, that the title of the family on the throne is interwoven with the assurances of our title of liberty, and now the King himself comes as the second deliverer of his people; and it may perhaps be considered as another circumstance not inauspicious to the duration of liberty, that the characteristical properties of the family on the throne, very opposite to encroaching ambition, should be distinguished by honesty and hereditary courage.

We have to advise and limit monarchy, and to exercise legislative power; a parliament consisting of a senate, without which no country was ever temperately or securely conducted; and a commons, without whose existence the people cannot be free, for such a system who is there that would not associate? But it is for its blessings, and not its abuses. I would associate for our present constitution on principles directly opposite to those on which it has been administered in Ireland. I would associate, because I do not think it is a monarchy, the exercise of whose authority depends on selling the honours of one house of Parliament, to buy the honesty of the other; because I do not think it is a senate whose honours should be sold, and because I do not think it is a house whose votes must be periodically bought for a million or half a million. To associate, therefore, for our constitution as administered in Ireland, would be an association for abuses, an association for grievance, an association for such mischiefs, that if not speedily abolished must destroy our most excellent constitution, and therefore would be an association, not for our constitution, but its destruction. Do you mean to say we are sensible of the virtues of the King and Constitution, and they may add, of the wisdom of the Earl of Westmorland. With government do you mean to embody the virtues of the King with the offences of his officer, and to make the association as a ridiculous mockery of His Majesty, and a false certificate for a bad servant; that is to say, we are so very fond of our

most excellent constitution that we do not care how much it is abused; it is to profess one thing, and to associate for another; to profess the constitution, and to combine for its abuses. But association is merely a palliative; unless the remedy goes along with it, what is the remedy? Settle the great question with our Catholic brethren; settle it on principles of liberty, of unanimity, and of extensive freedom.

What is the other remedy? It is a word you will find in the books. The lawyer peruses the description daily. It is a Parliament; a free and independent Parliament, chosen by the people. Whether the people have that at present, I need not debate, but I repeat it, the radical cure is a free and independent Parliament, chosen by the people.

I shall amend the address; that part of it which relates to His Majesty is cold and impolitic; his interposition to heal our religious animosities, is an act of distinguished wisdom; as such it should be marked, particularly at a time when attempts have been made on the thrones of princes; at such a time I would mark to the Catholics the King as the deliverer of his people. I would distinguish him from his ministers. I would mark that monarch who had rescued his people from the hands of those ministers, that however we may abhor their proceedings, we shall, if necessary, unite to rally in support of the throne, keeping clear of leaning to any French politics, or any wishes in favour of that nation now on the eve of a war with a country with whom we are by the Crown, by the law, by interest, and by every political tie, for ever to be connected.

I, therefore, move, that the following amendment be made in the address, after the word "Constitution," in the ninth paragraph.

"We admire the wisdom which at so critical a season has prompted Your Majesty to come forward to take a leading part in healing the political dissensions of your people on account of religion. We shall take into our immediate consideration the subject graciously recommended from the throne; and, at a time when doctrines pernicious to freedom, and dangerous to monarchical government are propagated in foreign countries, we shall not fail to impress Your Majesty's Catholic subjects, with a sense of the singular and eternal obligation they owe to the throne and to Your Majesty's Royal person and family."

Mr. Denis Browne, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Egan, and Mr. Serjeant Duquery, expressed their strong approbation of that part of the speech which recommended the case of the Roman Catholics to the consideration of Parliament. Mr. Serjeant Duquery said,

that the times did not admit of the refusal of just and moderate demands; and if government persisted in refusing a redress of grievances, his connexion with them would cease: he was ready to resign his situation; it was conferred without solicitation, and would be returned without murmur or regret. He censured the conduct of the government towards the Roman Catholics in the last session; treating them then with such contempt and now retracing their steps, showed a want of judgment and public care. Mr. Hobart (secretary), Dr. Duigenan, Mr. Barrington, and Mr. Sheridan, defended the conduct of government; and maintained that they had not acted towards the Roman Catholics, in the preceding session, with any disrespect. Mr. Hobart said, that when the Roman Catholics had applied to him in the session of 1790, on the subject of their petition, he gave them no encouragement, because he was not warranted to do so. Subsequently, when a relaxation of the Popery laws took place in Great Britain, he had communicated with them, and recommended to them most strongly to adopt a conciliatory line of conduct, as the only ground on which they could hope for indulgence from Parliament.

Mr. Grattan then agreed to withdraw his amendment, until the report on the address should be brought up from the committee.

On the ensuing day, the committee reported the address, when Mr. Grattan's amendment was proposed. It was warmly supported by Mr. Conolly, Mr. Forbes, Major Doyle, Mr. Curran, Mr. Serjeant Duquery, and Mr. Hardy. Mr. Conolly said, that during thirty-three years that he had sat in Parliament, he could not recollect so awful a moment as the present: the expenses and debt of the country were great, and the corrupt extravagance of administration were equal to both. He rejoiced that liberality towards the Catholics had been recommended *from the throne*; but he disapproved of that part of the address *which* thanked His Majesty for continuing the Earl of Westmorland in the government of the country.

Mr. Forbes wished that the acknowledgments to His Majesty for having recommended the Catholic claims to Parliament had been conceived in more forcible terms. He objected to the thanks returned for continuing Lord Westmorland in the government of Ireland; and, with respect to the passage where the words "*Our excellent constitution*" were inserted, he could not but observe, that the corrupt practices of the government had impaired its freedom and its excellence. The Lord Lieutenant had 110 pensioners in the House of Commons, and, for the tranquillity of the country, it was absolutely necessary that he should cease to be the chief governor.

Mr. Curran drew a very humorous picture of the political traffic resorted to in Parliament. Observe the progress and the profit of this traffic: Sir Francis sells his estate and buys a seat; brings Madam and Miss to a town, where, I dare say, they are likely to make many edifying discoveries; is introduced to a minister, who,

as the right honourable secretary says of himself, and, I am sure, justly, knows not how to be uncivil to any man. Well, Sir, Sir Francis takes a squeeze for a promise, and, full of future place, comes down and speaks for the good of the nation. He soon finds he has unluckily neglected one necessary preparation, — the learning to read; his eloquence cannot live long upon "hear him!" he finds he is better any where than on his legs; he therefore betakes himself to his seat, pops his chin upon his stick, listens and nods with much sapience, repays his "hear him!" and walks forth among the ayes with good emphasis and sound discretion. Thus he works on for seven sessions, and at last gets, not one place, but three places, — in the stage-coach, — for himself, and Madam and Miss, to go back to a ruined farm, with ruined healths and ruined morals; unworthy and unfit for the only society they can have; a prey to famished want and mortified pretensions; with minds exactly like their faded Castle-silks, — the minds too feeble to be reformed, and the gowns too rotten to be scoured.

Mr. Duquery replied to an attack made by the Solicitor-general (Mr. Toler). He has described me as as a man dejected in spirits; he has held me forth as a trumpeter; and, last of all, he has placed me behind the counter, opening a shop of grievances, With regard to the first charge of being low in spirits, I can assure the honourable gentleman that he is totally mistaken. I do not think that I ever found myself in better spirits in my life; and possibly the cheerfulness of my mind may result from a consciousness of discharging my duty as I ought; however, I by no means pretend to be possessed of that happy vivacity with which that honourable gentleman so peculiarly abounds. He is blessed with spirits that can scarcely be depressed by any event. On one occasion, however, I recollect the natural cheerfulness of his mind had almost forsaken him. When he beheld the royal sun, whose cheering beam had shone upon him for many years, verging, as he conceived, towards its final setting; and a new luminary rising in the political hemisphere, to which he had not yet paid his adoration, — then, indeed, for the first time, his lively spirits left him, and they sunk in proportion to his much dreaded loss of emolument; for with some men the true barometer of their spirits is the security of their office. Fortunately, however, our gracious Sovereign was restored to his health, and the honourable gentleman recovered his spirits. The station of a trumpeter, which the honourable gentleman has with so much kindness conferred upon me, I should accept with pleasure, if, like him, I could blow forth the virtues of viceroys and their ministers; yet ever unpractised as I am in flattery, I shall be happy to become his trumpeter, if he be so good as to say what notes I can sound in his praise, which will be grateful to the ears of the people. The last respectable station which he has been pleased to allot me, is that of opening a shop of grievances; if, by that elegant expression, he means that I have stated to this House with deep concern the sufferings of the people, I shall readily admit the charge he has so handsomely made

upon me; but whoever may open a shop of grievances, that honourable gentleman can best inform the House who has furnished that shop with all its materials.

Mr. Hardy vindicated Mr. Duquery from the charge of having abandoned his party. An honourable and learned gentleman has thought proper, among other things which he was pleased to mention of my honourable friend, to say, that last night he was in low spirits, and "most musical, most melancholy." It is the first time I ever heard that he was either the one or the other. But since my honourable friend has this night retired from the ministerial side of the House, will the learned gentleman allow me to do that which he did not do himself, that is, to quote the whole couplet alluded to by him, and then my honourable friend may be thus addressed:

"Sweet bird, that shun'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy."

Mr. GRATTAN observed—Sir, I did not say, as the right honourable gentleman seemed to conceive, that government had packed juries to vote resolutions against the Catholics, but I did say, and I repeat it, that the confidential minister of the Crown in England took a very forward and early part in inciting grand juries to enter into the most violent resolutions against the Catholics, and I add, that those servants of the Crown did thereby give the Protestants false hopes and false alarms; and I say also, that this country has been saved, by the personal interposition of the King, from the religious war, promoted by the violence of those ministers. A member has said that the minister could not have influenced a majority to vote in the last session for the Catholic pretensions, on the terms then proposed; supposing such an exertion of influence to be possible, it is my opinion it would have been successful; but I must think it very extraordinary in ministers to have represented in the last winter the impossibility of carrying that question, and in autumn to have tried to secure that impossibility, by promoting grand juries to pledge themselves and fortunes against such question. Such a discovery proves on the other side of the water a liberal disposition, and an intolerant disposition here of men intriguing in the mongrel capacity of minister and country gentleman, to render that liberality abortive; and the result of the transaction tends to sink the Irish ministry, and to exalt the King. A right honourable gentleman has observed, that the ministry has become unpopular from the efforts of opposition; one would have thought their own efforts had been sufficient. I have mentioned their conduct towards 3,000,000 of subjects, whose voice must constitute a considerable part of the people. But what was their conduct in other relationships? their conduct in rejecting

repeatedly a pension bill, a place bill, a responsibility bill, a barren land bill; in resisting a repeal of the police bill, in patronizing the abuses of that police, in attacking the rights of the corporation of Dublin; in SELLING the peerage, in BUYING the Commons; in creating near twenty new parliamentary provisions to procure a majority to support the Marquis of Buckingham; in persisting to prohibit our trade to the East, and in various other particulars, too trifling to be added to so black a catalogue. Could such a conduct be other than unpopular? No, says the right honourable gentleman, it was not the crime, it was the comment; the people, says he, never would have known that such a conduct was criminal, if they had not been informed by the opposition; they were informed; their eyes were opened by the ministers of the Crown, who told them in this House, speaking to the chair, that half a million had been expended to buy the House in 1769, and that another half million, if opposition persisted, would be expended to buy them once more; and this threat was followed by an increase of almost all your establishments, for provisions for members of Parliament. A right honourable baronet has said, that he condemns the speeches of this side of the House, as tending to depreciate Parliament. He should direct that discourse to his own side of the House, and to the minister with whom he votes; to those whose conduct, whose bribery, whose bartering has publicly attacked the integrity of the House of Commons, and therefore has endeavoured to destroy its character; what? will the right honourable baronet say, It is not the notorious sale of the honours of one House, to buy seats in the other, but that it is the observing on the enormity, that degrades Parliament; that man who supports the minister publicly and notoriously assailing the purity of Parliament, and who only objects to the indecorum of animadverting on the offence, may have an idea of public order, but not of public honesty. But, however, the minister has not left the discovery to us; he has proclaimed his own secret.

He told you of the half million; and if Parliament is defamed, he is the defamer. I apprehend, therefore, that those wishes that gentlemen may hear no more of such a subject will have but little effect; much more will they hear, until the evil is cured, and the purity of Parliament restored. This leads me to the argument of a right honourable gentleman, who requested that instead of resorting to general observations, we should come to particulars; he is right; we will come to particulars; we will propose special remedies for existing grievances; among other remedies *we will bring*

forward a reform of Parliament. This House, by the constitution, should be the organ of the people; by abuse it has become the organ of the minister; and, until the public voice speaks through this House that mind, the nation, will not be at ease.

The question is now abroad, and had better be settled here; such a settlement tends to introduce that union of mind so desirable at all times, and now so critically necessary. I do not agree with those gentlemen who think that men cannot be friends to the constitution, except they are also friends to its abuses; but sure I am, if you remove the abuses, they will be much more friendly to the constitution, and sure am I also that until you remove those abuses, however attached they may be to the King, they will not have any confidence in his ministers; it is therefore I must resist an opinion advanced in this debate, that no man could, on the present emergency, be discontented with the administration who was attached to the constitution; this, indeed, would confine the friends of monarchical government in this country to very few; it were to narrow the foundation of the throne to a small circle. I heard a right honourable gentleman has confessed the administration was unpopular; join the fact of the one gentleman with the argument of the other, and it would follow that the monarchical constitution was unpopular, because no man, according to this gentleman's idea, can be a friend to the constitution, who is an enemy to the administration. I think I remember instances where the greatest enemies to the constitution were the ministers; I think I remember an instance where ministers and monarchy have been at variance. What was the state of the question on the regency, but the monarchical principle on the one side, and the minister on the other? Let us not confound Kings with their servants, nor do such an injury to the royal cause, as to tell the people they are not to be considered as amical to the Crown, unless they are also friends to Lord Westmorland. The very statement must excite ridicule. Let us keep the causes ever distant; if indeed we were disposed to confound them, you will find in the speech from the throne matter to correct that error; a speech where the King appears not only distinct from his Irish ministry, but so distinct, that he rescues his people from that ministry's intolerance. Let ministers be criminal—let them be unpopular—let them, if you please, be the object of punishment; but whatever be their fate or their offences, let the fortunes of the Royal family be immortal.

I had more to say, but the House is exhausted. I sit down.

Mr. Grattan's amendment was unanimously agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES FOR A COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE INTO THE STATE OF THE REPRESENTATION.

January 14. 1793.

MR. William Brabazon Ponsonby, after a short speech, gave notice, that he would take an early opportunity of submitting a proposal to the House for a more equal representation of the people in Parliament.

Mr. Connolly declared his intention of giving his warm support to the proposed measure. He had formerly opposed such a motion, when it came from an armed body of men sitting in the metropolis, because the power to reform Parliament rested with itself; now, however, the evil has so encreased, that a remedy must be adopted, and the Cathelics should be admitted to the benefits of the constitution.

Mr. GRATTAN. Never, never since I have sat in Parliament, did I hear words that gave me more satisfaction. I have been near seventeen years a member of Parliament, and never did I hear in this House oratory more convincing or transporting. I feel myself young, and my mind possessed with rapture little known to men of my time of life, except on such an occasion as this. I had myself intended to have brought forth the question of the reform of Parliament, but I did not wish to pre-occupy such a question; for what right had I to earn popularity at the expense of other men? Those are the gentlemen who ought to lead in this great question; the men who make the sacrifices, to them belongs the laurel; — be it my humble office to follow on this subject, and to applaud,

> "And while along the stream of time their name
> Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
> Say, shall this little bark ——."

This is not the first time in which the right honourable gentleman has made sacrifices to the country; in 1769 that gentleman, and all his connections, were deprived of all their emoluments for supporting the privileges of this House against an altered money bill. In 1789 they were also dismissed for defending the privileges of the two Houses of Parliament against an unconstitutional and condemned Viceroy; and now they advance a third time to surrender great power, all their monopolies, and to embark in the vessel of commonwealth, and fairly and proudly to rise or fall with

the fortunes of their country. They pledge it right; their natural situation in this country is so considerable that whatever family sacrifices they make to the public weal, they must always occupy a prime condition, from their property, character, integrity, and talents.

The question of parliamentary reform is now fairly brought forth; it consists, I think, of two parts, external and internal. The external relates to the creation of the House of Commons; the internal to its corruption. A radical reformation in both is indispensable; first, it is indispensable that the House of Commons should be chosen by the people; second, that after it is chosen by the people, it should not be bought by the minister. In either of these cases, and still more in both, the people are not represented. The House of Commons is not chosen by them; the house is governed by the minister. The people have not the blessings of the constitution; they are not represented; they are deprived of that great and invaluable blessing, supposed to be possessed by the electors of this kingdom, the blessing of being represented; and, accordingly, we find the House of Commons the organ of a will other than that of the people—the will of the minister, the will of the viceroy, the will of the secretary, but not the will of the people. This is an abuse so evident, and so fatal, that I need not impress it more deeply upon you; indeed, you seem fully sensible of it; and now, when the persons interested in the above come forth to you to surrender that interest; who can defend such a mischief, or refuse such a sacrifice? I mean, therefore, to move for a committee to enquire into the abuses that obtain in the formation of the representation; but as those abuses are not all, I mean to extend the enquiry to the abuses that obtain in the corruption of that representation, which are both contained in the words "abuses of the constitution." It will not be sufficient, depend upon it, that the House of Commons should be chosen by the people; it is absolutely necessary that the House, after it is so chosen by the people, should not be bought by the minister, otherwise the people would have only the trouble to elect men for the minister afterwards to purchase; and therefore it is, I wish to impress on gentlemen the necessity of attending to this part of the reform of parliament, its internal reform, on which the purity of its conduct depends. In vain may the people send men to Parliament, fairly and popularly elected, if the minister has a power of giving those men places and pensions *without* number, and without responsibility; or, as has been *disclosed* by one of our ministers, a power of charging *the nation* with half a million, or any other sum, however great, to purchase

a majority in Parliament; therefore, do not imagine you have secured to the people an adequate, or any representation, by giving them a fair and adequate right of choice, if you leave to the minister the uncontrolled and indefinite right of bribery; a place bill, pension bill, responsibility bill, are, therefore, a necessary part of the great system which you are proceeding to form for your country. The whole must be reformed by a radical measure; the nation expects it, and you have taught the nation to expect it. The measure must secure to the people of this country a representation elected by the people, and independent of the minister; nothing less than that, is worthy of the occasion, nor adequate to the exigency or the expectation; we must have in these walls, the real, genuine, choice of the people, unbought, unstipulated. The motion, therefore, which I mean to submit, goes to this part of the subject, viz. to enquire into the abuses which have taken place in the regulation of the House of Commons, as well as its formation; it goes to the whole of the House of Commons; excess of influence and defects of representation. Gentlemen say, this is no time for such a measure. I answer the argument of those gentlemen who say not now, at least some of them, have at all times opposed parliamentary reform, and opposed it not on the time, but the principle; opposed it, because they had an interest in preferring a representation by borough, to a representation by the people. But, Sir, if the question wanted the aid of any argument arising from the time, I say the question has that argument in the present moment. Is not a French republic set up by a convention abroad, and alleged to be set up by a few at home, in rivalship to the British constitution; and is not this the moment to give that constitution all its natural advantages, by purging it of all its unnatural deformities? How can you combat the French doctrine so well, or effectually, as by the reform of Parliament? That is, by the constitution of England, its substance and not its shadow. Another argument the time suggests is, the agitation of this question at present with the people: it is now abroad. At a period less anxious, the moving the question had been to agitate the people, but the people being now agitated, the moving the question is the only way to compose them. From the best information I can collect, nothing will satisfy the north but a reform of Parliament; nothing will satisfy the people but a reform of Parliament. There is another argument in favour of agitating the question now, which existed at no other time but the present, and that is, that there was no other time in which you had a chance of succeeding. It is in my mind always an argument for bringing forward a question, that you have it in

your power to succeed. This is the time; arm the question now and you prevail, and in that success you secure to the country those blessings of liberty and constitution, of which she has heard so much, and naturally longs to taste.

I am clearly of opinion, that this is precisely the time for putting abuses of every kind in discussion. It is necessary to tell the people that Parliament are determined to repel every attempt to shake off the monarchy, but they should at the same be told, that we are ready to redress any reasonable grievances that the people may have to complain of; while we strengthen the government against its enemies, we should accompany that principle with a principle of redress. I shall, therefore, propose a motion, to enquire whether any and what abuses have taken place in our constitution, in order that they may be redressed. This will show the inclination of the House to reform, and it will greatly tend to promote public tranquillity, if this inclination shall be known. Societies are every where formed for the purpose of enquiring into the abuses in the constitution; the object is lawful and laudable. Shall it be said that this House is the only political society which will not enquire into those abuses? I do not, however, mean to entrap gentlemen by this motion into a declaration that abuses do exist; my object is merely that the question of enquiry shall be put into discussion; I would, therefore, have a committee instituted for that purpose. Another reason I have for preferring this mode is, that I think gentlemen now, as little as possible, ought to differ on great principles. They have uniformly differed on the particular bills that have been introduced to heal the evils complained of. Were these specific bills to be introduced again, how could they expect to meet a different treatment? How, indeed, could gentlemen treat them differently? I think it is, therefore, not uncandid by adopting an enquiry of this kind to leave gentlemen at liberty to act as the case and the temper of the times may require.

He concluded by moving, "that a committee be appointed to enquire whether any and what abuses have taken place in the constitution of this country, and in the administration of the government thereof; and to report such temperate remedies as may appear most likely to redress the same."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell), Mr. G. Ponsonby, General Conyngham, Mr. Stewart, and Mr. Sheridan, supported Mr. Grattan's motion. Mr. Corry proposed an amendment, viz. that instead of a committee to enquire into the abuses in the constitution and the administration, a committee should be appointed to enquire into the state of the representation of the people in Parliament.

Mr. GRATTAN said: Sir, any member has a right to separate the questions. I agree to separate them; my motion was to the abuses in the representation of the people, to the influence of the Crown in Parliament, and also to the corruptions which have taken place in the administration of its government. *All must be reformed;* but if the House wish to confine themselves to a part of my motion for the present, the state of the representation, I will rejoice that they pledge themselves so far, and shall not hesitate to adopt the amendment, and thank the member who suggested it.

This amendment was then agreed to; and the question being put, "That the House will, on this day three weeks, resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to enquire into the state of the representation of the people in Parliament," it was carried in the affirmative without a division.

BREACH OF PRIVILEGE.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL MOVES THAT THE PRINTER OF THE HIBERNIAN JOURNAL BE CALLED TO THE BAR OF THE HOUSE, AND TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.

January 29. 1793.

ON the 28th, the Attorney-general called the attention of the House to what he considered a very gross libel on their character and dignity. He then produced the Hibernian Journal of the 18th, in which, he said, were some resolutions, purporting to be the resolutions of an aggregate meeting of the citizens of Dublin, and which were signed by Henry Hutton, one of the high sheriffs of this city. Two of those only he thought worthy the attention of the House. One of them containing an assertion, "that the House of Commons is not freely chosen by the people;" the other, "that the House, as at present influenced by places of emolument and pensions, does not speak the sense of the people." After saying a few words by way of animadversion on these resolutions, he moved, That Thomas M'Donnel, the printer of said paper, do attend at the bar of the House to-morrow.

The motion passed, and Mr. M'Donnel was ordered to attend at the bar the ensuing day.

On this day he attended pursuant to order; and the Speaker asked him, what he had to say in his defence?

The clerk of the House having come to the bar with the paper which contained the resolutions that laid the foundation for which Mr. M'Donnel had been called to the bar, he acknowledged that he was the printer and proprietor of that paper.

Mr. M'Donnel, in justification of himself, said, that these resolutions were sent to him, authenticated under the signature of one of the high sheriffs of this city, and that the sheriff had authorized him to say, that he had signed them as chairman of the meeting, and was ready to avow it, if called upon.

The Attorney-general, after a speech of some length, concluded by moving, That Mr. Thomas M'Donnel has been guilty of a breach of the privilege of this House, and that he be taken into custody by the sergeant at arms.

Mr. Curran moved the question of adjournment. He was supported by Mr. Hardy, Mr. Connolly, Mr. Graydon, Mr. Ponsonby, and Mr. Forbes, who declared his astonishment at such proceedings; that if the motion of the Attorney-general was carried, a seat in that House would not be worth having: the resolutions were legal and constitutional. It had been repeatedly complained in the House, that too many placemen and pensioners had seats in it: the present question was, in his opinion, the most imprudent that the House could discuss. Mr. Curran's motion was opposed by Mr. Bushe, Mr. Solicitor-general, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell).

Mr. GRATTAN said: The resolutions of the city are to be taken altogether; they will then appear to contain, first, an inviolable attachment to the person and family of the King; secondly, a decided attachment to monarchy; thirdly, as decided an attachment to the parliamentary constitution, consisting of Lords and Commons; and, lastly, a most ardent wish, in concurrence with this House, that the latter might undergo a reformation; and, as a reason for that wish, and not with a view to insult, they repeat what the minister of the Crown did frequently suggest in this House, that the majority, as at present influenced by places and pensions, are not free and independent. In this they teach, what within these walls has been defended by the minister and the servants of the Crown, that public money had been at different periods disposed of to beat down an aristocracy in Parliament, and that new places were only political expedients; and, as such, were to be justified.

The city, repeating the principles and declarations of His Majesty's ministers, are said to be guilty of a libel on the House of Commons, by those ministers who have themselves been guilty of the crime of corrupting, and the indecency of publishing that corruption; I, therefore, again advise those ministers not to join issue with the public on the question, whether they have corrupted the House of Commons; they know their conduct, and how vulnerable they are on this subject: I warn them not to suggest to the public the criminal nature of their own conduct, by representing the

mere statement of it by the city a breach of privilege. If it is a breach of privilege, to charge the majority of the House with corruption, what would be the offence of the minister who had become a minister by no other means? However, the right honourable gentleman is determined to maintain the dignity of Parliament, and he does it by committing the printer who is innocent; that is, who has done no more than publish an act of the city, by the order of the sheriff, who avows the act, and says he is here to justify, and who is not to be the subject of any motion or proceeding. Here you show at once injustice and pusillanimity, and call this a defence of your dignity: the right honourable gentleman, the mover, just does enough to offend the capital and disgrace the House of Commons.

I have just heard His Majesty's answer, and I have in my hand His Majesty's speech, and I find in both, a strong recommendation to this House, to unite all classes of men in support of our constitution, by taking their condition into consideration; and I saw, to my astonishment, the right honourable gentleman, immediately after the latter had been read, rise to commit, as far as he can, one class of men, a very important class—the capital with the government; and that for an assertion which he knows to be true, and which his friends have propagated. He and those friends have been employed in the summer in making a religious war on the Catholics. The other day the administration committed themselves with the old volunteers; they now commit themselves with the capital. The right honourable gentleman tells us he has a number of private battles beside, with societies, individuals, printers, and so forth; and this is the method the servants of the Crown in Ireland take to procure union among all classes of men, in pursuance to the orders of His Majesty.

That gracious speech inculcates that, concord, which, to the House of Commons, is a mild suggestion, should, by the servants of the Crown, be received as a peremptory command. The right honourable gentleman accompanies his measures of disunion, of distraction, of division, with great bitterness of expression, and says that resolutions breathing nothing but attachment and constitution, with a complaint that the House of Commons is filled with placemen and pensioners, is the act of a seditious few, by which he must mean the citizens of the capital; but I find, on explanation, he, by seditious, only means the movers of the resolutions, and the rest of the city he says were deceived, that is, were dupes: in what? in declaring the virtues of the King, the excellence of a monarchical government, and the excess of undue in-

fluence in the House of Commons. Is this the manner in which His Majesty's ministers in Ireland encourage his subjects in professing their allegiance? No, says a placeman; what signifies allegiance if you reflect on the influence of the minister in the House. He thinks any loyalty which attacks his office is a breach of privilege; no allegiance, however strong and decided, an excuse in attacking places and pensions, which attack they on the other side call a breach of privilege; so much more anxious are gentlemen to defend the corruption of ministers than the dignity of the Crown; the minister's crimes, than kingly government; and in support of these crimes they are willing to involve the country in confusion. From some of their late proceedings, I should think that, fearing their own extinction in the reform of Parliament, they wished to prevent it by provoking the nation to tumult, or that they went on without counsel, design, or capacity, or that they were advised by men who are not responsible for the consequence of their advice, and cared not how much they precipitate government. The Irish ministers have great advantages over us; they may run away; they have no root in this country; they have nothing to lose here or forfeit; but we must remain, willing, but perhaps unable, to quell those disturbances, excited by their incapacity and mischief. It is, therefore, I deprecate those measures which they now pursue; measures to show the sensibility of this House, to sink its dignity, and to offend the city; measures which tell the public that the privilege of this House is broken, and that you dare not assert it. If I had come into the House with any doubt on the subject, the prevailing argument on the other side of the House had removed it; that prevailing argument was the danger of republican sentiments; the danger of anti-monarchical principles, circulating round Europe to Ireland; and the result of that argument has been, to induce gentlemen to vote a declaration of loyalty a breach of privilege; and the excuse they make is, that the declaration of loyalty contains also a declaration in favour of a reform in Parliament, accompanied with reasons for wishing the same; and, among others, alleging the corruption of His Majesty's ministers in Parliament. This these ministers call a breach of privilege; so that the people in this country are neither to support the King or constitution, if they question the corruption of ministers.

The House divided on Mr. Curran's motion; Ayes 70, Noes 154; Majority 84. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Curran and Mr. Forbes; for the Noes, Mr. Arthur Wellesley and Mr. Solicitor-general.

The Attorney-general then moved, "That the said publication, in asserting that this House is not free and independent, contains a libel on, and is a violation of, the privileges of this House." This passed in the affirmative; and Mr. M'Donnel was ordered to be taken into the custody of the sergeant at arms.

PROCLAMATION OF THE LORD LIEUTENANT.

January 31. 1793.

ON the 29th, Mr. Hobart (secretary) presented to the House, by order of His Excellency, the following Proclamation:.

"Westmorland,

"Whereas we have received information, that divers ill-affected persons have entered into illegal and seditious associations in the county and city of Dublin, to withstand lawful authority, and violently and forcibly to redress pretended grievances, and to subvert the established constitution of this His Majesty's realm; and with a view to carry into effect these their seditious purposes, have by colour of laudable associations heretofore formed in this kingdom by His Majesty's loyal subjects, for repelling foreign invasion and maintaining peace and good order, publicly declared their intention to appear in arms, to avow their approbation of tumult and disorder, and to encourage the citizens of Dublin to follow their evil example, and have also conspired together to raise, levy, and muster within the county and city of Dublin a number of armed men, to parade in military array, with various devices and ensigns of disaffection to His Majesty and the constitution, and have actually ordered uniforms and accoutrements to be made and provided for such persons as they shall be enabled to seduce from their allegiance, to enter into the said illegal associations; and whereas these dangerous and seditious proceedings tend to the disturbance of the public peace, the obstruction of good order and government, the great injury of public credit, and the subversion of the constitution, and have raised great alarms in the minds of His Majesty's loyal subjects.

"Now we, the Lord-lieutenant and council, being determined to maintain the public peace, against all attempts to disturb the same, and being desirous to forewarn all such persons as might unadvisedly incur the penalties of the law in this behalf, by concurring in practices of a tendency so dangerous and alarming, do hereby strictly charge all persons whomsoever, on their allegiance to His Majesty, to abstain from committing such offences.

"And we do charge and command the lord mayor, magistrates, sheriffs, bailiffs, and other peace officers within the county and city of Dublin respectively, to be careful in preserving the peace within the same, and to disperse all seditious and unlawful

assemblies; and if they shall be resisted, to apprehend the offenders, that they may be dealt with according to law.

"Given at the Council-chamber in Dublin, the 8th Dec. 1792.

Fitz-Gibbon C.	Clonmell	J. H. Hutchinson	D. Latouche
Bective	Loftus	J. Parnell	R. Hobart
Bellamont	Carleton	Lucius O'Brien	Arth. Wolfe
Carhampton	Mountjoy	W. Conyngham	Ja. Fitzgerald
Dillon	J. Foster	H. T. Clements	H. Langrishe."
Pery	J. Beresford	R. Cunningham	

On this day the proclamation against the newly formed volunteer corps was taken into consideration, when Lord Headfort, after stating that notwithstanding this proclamation, some corps attempted to parade on the Sunday preceding, but by the interposition of the magistrates they were prevented, it became of course the duty of the House to give their sanction to the proclamation, to enable government to carry it into full effect. He accordingly moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Lord-lieutenant, thanking him for communicating the proclamation issued on the 8th of December, 1792; and to assure His Excellency, that we consider the same as a timely and judicious mark of His Excellency's vigilant attention to the tranquillity of this metropolis; and that His Excellency may depend on our most cordial support in such measures as may be necessary to carry the said proclamation into effectual execution, and that we applaud the wisdom which, in the said proclamation, distinguished the corps who armed in defence of their country and the constitution, from those whose declared objects were sedition, tumult, or disaffection to His Majesty."

Mr. Prendergast Smith seconded the motion: it was supported by Mr. Denis Browne, Mr. Burton Conyngham, Mr. Stewart, (of Killymoon,) the Attorney-general, and Mr. George Ponsonby he approved of the distinction made between the old volunteers and the modern corps, who used disaffected emblems; he thought the noble lord wrong in alluding to the affair of the goldsmiths' corps, as that was one of the old corps whose conduct had hitherto been laudable. Mr. Hobart condemned the conduct of the goldsmiths' corps. He read their summons, issued previous to the proclamation. It was as follows:

"Citizen-soldier, in consequence of the unanimous resolution of delegates, from all the volunteer corps in the city and county of Dublin, you are requested to parade at Ship-street, on Sunday next, to celebrate the victory of the French army, and the triumph of universal liberty, over despotism. To a man who desires or deserves to be free, it is unnecessary to say more.

"Signed by order,

"MAT. DOWLING, Sec.

"Dated last year, would to God
I could say last moment, of slavery."

Mr. Hobart also read an address from a society, called "United Irishmen," to some volunteer corps in December last, and also the resolutions of the goldsmiths' and two other corps, thanking the society for that publication.

Mr. GRATTAN said: I approve of the proclamation as much as I condemn the use which the minister now attempts to make of it. The proclamation arraigned a certain body of men, whom it describes to be an association assuming devices and emblems of disaffection. The minister applies that to the volunteers of the city and the county: under that colour proposes to disperse them; and, in order to justify that project, he produces a formal charge; that charge is confined to two heads; first, a summons purporting to be that of the corps of goldsmiths, reciting that the delegates of the corps were to assemble, to celebrate the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick, and the French victory in the Low Countries, and inciting the goldsmiths' corps to attend. I do not ask how far it was perfectly discreet to celebrate such an event, particularly if we consider the consequences to which such an event might possibly lead; but I ask, was it a ground for dismissing the volunteers? Do ministers mean to say, that they will disperse all the volunteers of Ireland who celebrate the French victories in Brabant. I ask, also, of any man who can read, whether such a celebration brings these obnoxious corps within the description of the proclamation? Whether such a celebration was assuming the ensign or devices of disaffection? And it is the more obvious that such an event was not judged by the council who signed the proclamation a good reason for including the corps of the city, because after that event had taken place it expressly excepted them: it has saved the laudable associations, under the description of the old volunteers, and has confined the proclamation to the national guard. The style of the summons has given offence: ministers do not approve of it. It begins, "Citizen-soldiers;" they are French terms, or rather terms of French foppery, below our imitation. The date has also given offence; "the last year, or the last moment, of slavery!" Here again is the French style or frippery introduced: but is that or the other expression, or both, sufficient ground for the minister to disperse the corps, or is it such an offence as comes within the description of the proclamation? No man who reads, can say it is. The minister himself, aware that his first charge was insufficient, has produced another. He has read a long address from a society called the United Irishmen, inviting the people of Ireland to assemble in a national convention, and containing an abundance of other matter; and he then produces a succession of resolutions from some of the corps of Dublin, one of which resolutions returns thanks to the society of United Irishmen. Without giving any kind of approbation of the matter of that address, I must say, that I think

a minister would be highly indiscreet and presumptuous who should say that the volunteers had, by those thanks, brought themselves within the description of the proclamation, or that they were guilty of assuming emblems and devices of disaffection; as little should I think him justified in dispersing them, merely on account of those thanks. If so, you give the minister a right to disperse every volunteer corps in the city and county, if he does not approve of their politics. Now, though in the many resolutions which young men may adopt, some will be, and many were exceptionable, yet I would not wish to establish over them in the minister an authority to take away their arms, if he disapproves of their politics. I know the evil use that he will make of that power, and the dangerous consequences and confusion to which it leads. Permit me to ask this right honourable gentleman, who has arraigned the old volunteer corps, is it his intention to multiply volunteers? If so, I apprehend he is adopting the means; if the city and county corps are not intimidated, but increase by the attempts of the government to disperse them, if they stand to their arms, and are supported by their brethren, what becomes of his project? But if, on the other hand, they should disperse in the capital, does he imagine the volunteers will be deterred in the north? He ought to prove that the way to recruit for volunteers in the north was to attack them in the city. They will consider his attack as an affront, and think that the cause of a part is the cause of the whole. The minister is, therefore, doing the very thing which he wishes to prevent; he is provoking a general armament; he is doing more; he is detaching that armament from Parliament. In his charge against the volunteers he has mentioned a national convention. I hope this House will, by reforming the Parliament, prevent such an assembly, the consequences of which may be very unfortunate; but if the minister wishes to give such an assembly an army at its back, he is taking the method, by committing this House as well as himself with the volunteers, and attempting to detach them from the established constitution. The object of the right honourable mover, in 1779, of resolutions of thanks to the volunteers, was to attach them to the House of Commons. I think the object was a right one; that of the minister now is to detach them from the House. I think his object is an evil one; and the manner in which the minister proceeds, convicts him of imprudence. He does not, in this proclamation, venture to arraign the old corps; he does not, in the address approving of the proclamation, attempt to arraign them; on the contrary, they are the objects of commendation in both; but when he comes to speak, he departs from the

address and proclamation, and proposes such an interpretation of both, as goes against the spirit and letter of either, and such as would enable him to disperse the old corps, under the seeming approbation of this House. Thus does he endeavour to lead this House much farther than it intends, making the House at once praise the old corps, and then putting such a comment on that praise as amounts to a proposal to disperse them for disaffection. I, therefore, desire, in giving my approbation to the proclamation, to be distinctly understood. I approve of it, because it did propose to disperse the national guard, and because it did not propose to disperse the volunteers.

Although I unequivocally condemn the insolence, disaffection, and the dangerous tendency of the counter-proclamation, published by the United Irishmen; though I am grieved that the corps should seem to testify any approbation of it, yet still I would not treat an old corps with severity, for any idle or indiscreet resolution. I beg gentlemen to consider that warm and inexperienced young men frequently make up a large part of a corps; that resolutions might be adopted on a sudden and without consideration, which, upon reflection, they would be anxious to recant. This I say in extenuation of their fault; and further, I do not think they come within the meaning of the proclamation; but if any corps whatever should manifest principles of disaffection, either by exhibiting emblems of sedition, or publishing treasonable resolutions, I think government called upon to use all its power to suppress them.

The question was then put on the address; and it passed without a division.

REFORM IN PARLIAMENT.

MR. GRATTAN SUBMITS HIS RESOLUTIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF A REFORM IN THE REPRESENTATION.

February 11. 1793.

THE House, pursuant to order, resolved itself into a committee, to enquire into the state of the representation of the people in Parliament, Sir Michael Cromie in the chair.

Mr. GRATTAN rose to propose certain resolutions: —

I will not say that this is the most important subject that was ever agitated in this House; I do remember, in 1782, an-

other subject of equal, if not superior, moment. The question then was, whether Ireland should be governed by the Parliament of another country; and the present is, whether she shall enjoy a Parliament of her own? As the subject of parliamentary reform is now posted, it is impossible for government to retreat from it. Their declarations the fourth day of the session; the words of the Lord-lieutenant's secretary; the liberal grants of the House; have established the necessity of acceding to a reform in Parliament, and have sealed the doom of every rotten borough in the kingdom; hence I collect two things; that Parliament should be reformed; that the reform must take place this session. Here let us appeal to gentlemen conversant with the disposition of the people; do not they think so? Are they not convinced of it; do not they know; have they not declared that their constituents do now expect a reform of Parliament, and that it is a measure not more necessary for their freedom than their felicity? Having mentioned the state of the question, I will advert to the state of your representation; it is short. Of three hundred members, above two hundred are returned by individuals; from forty to fifty are returned by ten persons; several of your boroughs have no resident elector at all; some of them have but one; and, on the whole, two-thirds of the representatives in the House of Commons are returned by less than one hundred persons! This is not that ancient, that venerable constitution of King, Lords, and Commons. It is not even an aristocracy: it is an oligarchy. It is not an oligarchy of property, but of accident; not of prescription, but of innovation. Here, again, I appeal to the conscious conviction of every man who hears me; and I assert two propositions, which can neither be denied nor defended:— First, that the majority of the representatives are chosen by individuals; second, that a great proportion of them are afterward endowed by the Crown. And it follows, that, in our present state of representation, the House of Commons cannot be supposed to be the organ of the people.

In defence of such a state, three arguments are advanced: first, its antiquity — antiquity! an establishment you would imagine that took place in Saxon times, in the age of the Confessor, or after the English intercourse with Ireland, at the time of the charter of John, or the reign of Edward: — No! James I. was the King who made above forty of those private boroughs. In the year 1613, the numbers returned to Parliament were two hundred and thirty-two, since which time sixty-eight members have been added, all by the House of Stuart; one by Anne, four by James II., most of the

remainder by Charles I., with a view to religious distinctions, and by Charles II. with a view to personal favour. If you look to antiquity, therefore, the boroughs stand on bad ground. The frame of your constitution was twelve counties, established in the reign of King John. Henry VIII. added one; Mary two; and Elizabeth seventeen. Since which time your counties received no addition whatsoever, though between the year 1613 and the present, the borough interest has received an addition of sixty-eight members; which is more than the whole of the county representation.

The great division on this subject is cities or boroughs, where the grant was to burgesses and freemen indefinite, or to a limited number of burgesses, seldom exceeding twelve, in whom the right of election was confined. The former are boroughs intended to be free, and the latter intended to be otherwise. The number of the former I apprehend to be above forty; and where they have become what we understand to be intended by the word "close boroughs" they have departed from the intention of the grant, and ought, pursuant to the meaning of that grant, to be opened. The other class, which I apprehend to be above forty, are in their origin vicious; it is a monopoly — like any of the other monopolies of James I.; — a grant, in its nature criminal. Most of the forty boroughs created by James I. were so. It appears from the grants themselves, that they were intended to be private property: they were granted as a personal reward for doing some specified transaction. Such a grant could stand, I apprehend, on no principle whatsoever. These, with those made by Charles I., became a subject of complaint; they were most of them made on the eve of calling a Parliament, and some of them not sealed till after the writs of summons had issued, and were so loudly complained of, that Charles I. had promised to submit a plan to the consideration of Parliament. Thus are these two descriptions of boroughs; the one intended to be free by the grant, and rendered close by the proprietor; the other intended to be close by the grant, and rendered vicious by the principles of the law. The first set of boroughs are liable to be questioned for departing from their original purpose, and the last for adhering to it.

Let us compare the state of these boroughs with the principles of the constitution. The principles of the constitution are sacred; its organization accidental. Are these defensible on the ground of population or property, or population and property mixed? Population is out of the case; and as to property, we will suppose two hundred members returned by one hundred individuals; what property do the former re-

present? Suppose the property of these individuals is 4000*l.* per annum; they represent 400,000*l.*, and vote near 2,000,000*l.* taxes on the people. They are two-thirds of the House voting near 2,000,000, and not representing half a million. But if you add what is received back again in place or pension, you will find it comes nearly to this, that the majority tax others and not their constituents. Take it in a stronger light; it is well known that near forty persons are returned by about ten individuals, somewhat more than the sixth of the House of Commons, representing that quantity of property and population. By the old constitution, the constituents paid their representatives; try the present state of representation by that test.

Could the one hundred individuals pay the two hundred members? Could the ten individuals pay the forty members? So far from any right on the principle of property to send so many members to Parliament to pay the state, they could not pay the members. The argument, therefore, can stand no examination; neither the test of property, nor population, nor antiquity; these boroughs have been established by accident, by humour, by ignorance, and by favour, without any regard to property, population, or any one principle of constitution. The second argument in their favour is, that they have worked well; that the constitution has flourished under rotten boroughs. I beg to consider the operations of the constitution on the public welfare and on private property.

As to public welfare, I acknowledge many beneficial acts, wholesome regulations, and one great revolution; but may I be suffered to think that the redemption of this country had been more speedily established; the good of this country more uniformly pursued; and with less intervals of inconsistency, if Parliament had been constituted more according to the principles of the constitution? As it is instituted, to me its ordinary operation appears defective, its raptures transitory, and its relapses disgraceful.

You have certain committees, committees of courts of justice; have they acted? — committees of trade; have they acted? What was the case of the East India trade? Committees of grievances; have they acted? It appears to me that the functions of the House of Commons would be discharged with more benefit to the public, and more honour to itself under a constitution by representation, than a constitution by boroughs. I have had opportunities to speak to the growth of the expenses of government. I have shown, without the possibility of contradiction, that in seven years

you have, in those expenses alone, exceeded your estimates in the sum of 163,000*l.* I did not form my comparison with the actual expense of 1784; if I had, the excess had been greater, particularly with regard to the civil establishment, which was in the year 1784, 174,000*l.* and the excess therefore 33,000*l.*, not 17,000*l.* as the right honourable gentleman was pleased to mention. But I mentioned a progress of expense still more striking, that since the year 1769, you have increased your annual charge, including debt, more in proportion than Great Britain, notwithstanding American war, and all her armaments. But the evil effects on private fortunes of this species of representation are more sensibly felt, and more readily understood: those who have contested boroughs, those who have repeatedly obtained seats in this House for boroughs, may find in their mortgages an answer to the admirers of the present system. I may aver, without fear of contradiction, that the expenses of election and returns to Parliament are so ruinous, that no private fortune can support them; that the expense for obtaining returns for a borough, except under the gift of a patron, are so great, as no private fortune can sustain—that these expenses increase with the powers of the constitution. I have heard that seats in this House forty years ago were obtained for 600*l.* I have heard they now cost 3000*l.*, and you know these expenses are ultimately paid by the public. Hence arises what we often lamented, the trade of Parliament, a trade in which the dealer does not make 6 per cent. by his money, with all the other sacrifices of honour, &c. I wish to lay the axe at the root of this trade, in which the political morality, as well as the freedom of the country, are intimately concerned. I shall be told there are exceptions to this expense; I feel it; but I feel also that the expense is the rule and the saving an exception. The property of boroughs; the sale of boroughs; the sale of honours; sale of votes, private embarassments, and public servility, all will be corrected by the reform of Parliament, and the constitution, under its defective state, so far from working as well as gentlemen have flattered themselves, has been attended with a growth of public expense, equalled only by an accumulation of private difficulties. The third argument in support of the present system is, that gentlemen cannot agree about a better. If we agree in what we condemn; we cannot well differ in the principle on which we are to reform. We agree, I apprehend, that twelve burgesses should not return two members to serve in Parliament; that is, we agree in the destruction of close boroughs. We agree on the princi-

ple which is to conduct your compasses, a mass of propertied people, the precise number only to be a subject of discussion; but we agree that we are to look to a mass of people having property. How far we are to go, and what geographical line, whether the circle of county or any lesser circumscription, may be a subject of discussion, but not of discord.

We cannot differ about the propriety of residence; of extending the right of franchise to freemen by birth, marriage, or the exercise of a trade for a certain time. Perhaps we shall not differ on the propriety of extending the right of voting to landholders for years, having a certain valuable interest; an universal registry; elections to be limited in time, and to be carried on in different places at once; an oath to be taken by the candidate, and to be repeated at your bar, by the member,

"That he has not been at any expense whatsoever, nor paid any sum whatsoever, to procure his return, by himself or others."

These, with some other regulations, when added to an internal reform, which should exclude officers of the revenue, and a long &c. which my friend will explain, and which will reduce the influence by excluding all pensioners for years, and placemen, except such as are in higher departments, show, I think, that the subject, however it may have been supposed to be involved in difficulties, yet contains the principles of concord.

These broad principles carried into execution must insure you that constitution, temperate at once and pure, founded on the true principles of property, with population, including what is well understood by the words, "Constitutional Public," giving to every farmer a sort of station in his country; and to every landlord an interest to give an encouraging lease. Thus, the reform of Parliament may be a good system of agriculture, as well as of liberty. These principles, I say, carried into execution, may produce that steady calm in the minds of men, which results from the sense of a good constitution, and the benefits of an honest representation; and subordination will be more cheerful, as freedom becomes more universal.

Mr. Grattan then read three resolutions, and moved the first.

Resolved, That the representation of the people is attended with great and heavy charges and payments, in consequence of elections and returns of members to serve in Parliament, and that said abuses ought to be abolished.

Resolved, That of the 300 members elected to serve in

Parliament, the counties, and counties of cities, and towns, together with the University, return 84 members, and that the remaining 216 are returned by boroughs and manors.

Resolved, That the state of the representation of the people in Parliament requires amendment.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer opposed the resolutions, on the ground that they tended to lower the character of the House of Commons; the Parliament had corrected certain abuses, the octennial bill, and the mode of determining contested elections, had effected a useful reformation. Under the present system, the prosperity of the country had increased; and the measures adopted in 1782, showed that the Parliament were disposed to favour the rights of the people. He accordingly moved, by way of amendment, the following resolutions: —

"That if any plan shall be proposed which shall promise additional benefits, without hazarding the advantages that we at present enjoy, it shall be considered to be entitled to the most serious attention of the committee."

"That, under the present order of representation, the privileges of the people have been extended; and that the agriculture, the trade, and the commerce of the nation have been promoted."

The amendment was supported by Mr. Hobart, Mr. Barrington, Mr. Denis Brown, Sir John Blaquiere, and Mr. Bushe. Mr. Robert Stewart (afterwards Lord Castlereagh) recommended the adoption of Mr. Grattan's motion: he said reform was necessary in both kingdoms, but more particularly in Ireland. It occurred to him, that it would be a good plan of reform to give the electors of counties a power of returning all the members now chosen within the county for boroughs, allowing, however, to each elector a voice only for one member: he was against an internal reform, without an external one; it was founded in reason and justice, and would ultimately establish itself. The provost (Mr. Hutchinson, secretary of state) maintained the necessity of reform; the independence of Parliament had been subverted by the house of Stuart; King James made forty boroughs at one stroke, most of them on the eve of a new Parliament, and some after the writs of summons had issued, and the measure was so doubtful in its character, that Parliament conceived these boroughs had no power to return members to sit in the House; he supported Mr. Grattan's motion, and recommended the House to proceed in the business with caution. Mr. Duquery, Mr. Ponsonby, Mr. Forbes, and Mr. Curran, also supported Mr. Grattan's motion; they maintained the urgent necessity of yielding to the request of the people. Government had augmented the army 3000 men, then 5000 men; they introduced a bill for regulating the carriage and keeping of arms and ammunition: these were strong measures; and if the circumstances of the country required them, they should be tempered by lenient and popular measures likewise.

Mr. Grattan, in reply, said: The right honourable gentleman has called the submitted resolution a libel on

Parliament, hoping, no doubt, that I should have introduced some strong and indecorous resolutions, which would have given them an opportunity of opposing the principle of the reform in Parliament, under the colour of maintaining its reputation; but I have so framed the resolutions that none of them directly go to degrade this House, at the same time that they do most certainly arraign the practices and defects which attend the representation. The first resolution strikes directly at the sale of boroughs; it does indeed strike at the expenses of elections, but it does also and directly strike at the sale of boroughs; and for so much corrects one great vice in your representation, without correcting which, it is in vain to think of correcting the others. Gentlemen have said, this motion is the subject of an election bill; an election bill that compassed this part of the subject would be, for so much, a reform bill. I confess, I think the motion is but little understood; it is not conceived to reach the sale of boroughs. The words, "payments for returns to serve in Parliament," mean more than expenses at elections; and for that reason they are inserted: they go directly to the root of the sale of boroughs; and the reason why I began with this part of the subject is, because you have as strong evidence as you can have, or would receive, touching the sale of boroughs; you would not receive public proof, and you have already internal conviction of that abuse; therefore you cannot say against this resolution what you will be too willing to say against the others, that you have no proof.

This resolution then puts the question directly to your breast, are you or are you not an enemy to the reform of Parliament? If you resist this motion, it is not because you want evidence, for you have all the evidence this part of the subject admits of; it is not because you exact respect for the existing constitution, for this measure is drawn up in terms of unquestionable decorum, so it is because you are not yet sincere on the subject.

The other two resolutions go to the inadequacy of the representation; the first states, proportions of which you have had proof these many years, and the third, from that resolution infers, that the state of your representation requires amendment; here I am under difficulties; if on the one hand to arraign, or on the other hand to leave unquestioned the present state of your House of Commons. I have taken what I think a decorous part. I have questioned its defects respectfully, without disappointing those who only wish a reform, or gratifying those who wish the degradation of Parliament. If you pass these resolutions, you must re-

form the representation; but I see from the opposition to the first, the propriety of keeping back the last; for if the committee will not go so far as to say that sale of boroughs are an abuse, it will not say the representation is defective; the truth is, the committee will say nothing on the subject; but it is in vain to parry it; you must reform Parliament, and you must do it this session; you have gone too far to go back. I look upon the reform of Parliament as a measure of absolute necessity, and if you resist us in one shape, we will return in twenty, until at last this great point is achieved for the country. The amendment of the right honourable member proposes, that if a plan, such as the amendment describes, is submitted, the committee will consider it. The right honourable gentlemen forgets that the committee is appointed to inquire into the state of the representation only. The amending that state by a specific plan, is the business most honourably and disinterestedly occupied by another right honourable member*, whom I wish on this subject not to come across, but follow and assist; were I to come with a specific plan to this committee, I should be guilty of attempting to do by the instrument of the committee, what he will do by the bill, propound a plan of reform; it is my object, therefore, in this committee to pledge you to the business, and to speed it so as that it may be completed this session of Parliament. Those gentlemen who are most impatient for a specific plan, are impatient for it in order to attack the principle, under pretence of cavilling with the plan; no, Sir; but when gentlemen are sufficiently embarked in the principle, then will be the proper time for producing a plan.

The right honourable gentlemen in his amendment, invites you indeed to produce a plan, but, at the same time, tells you it is unnecessary; for the House of Commons, in the present state of representation, has done every thing which your trade and your constitution require; and under pretence of defending the character of Parliament, he suggests the practical excellence of your present representation; his amendment, therefore, goes against the reform of Parliament; but, fearing such an amendment is too strong, he softens it afterwards, and says, it is true if you can find what he thinks you cannot; such a plan of reform as shall secure you all your advantages, and give you more than indeed he will. What! adopt it! — No; consider it. Who will consider? not the House, but a committee appointed to another purpose — for the purpose of enquiring into the state of the representation, not framing a bill for the reform of Par-

* Mr. W. B. Ponsonby.

liament; so that his amendment is objectionable for its informality as well as its contents. He cannot propose it in the committee, and he ought not to propose it in the House; and proposed in either, it injures the great question to which we are all attentive, and most of us pledged — the reform of Parliament.

Mr. Marcus Beresford moved the question of adjournment, on which the House divided: — Ayes 153, Noes 71; Majority 82. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. M. Beresford; for the Noes, Mr. Robert Stewart (afterwards Lord Castlereagh).

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

MR. FORBES'S MOTION REGARDING THE STATE OF THE REPRESENTATION.

February 19. 1793.

ON this day Mr. Forbes brought forward his motion on the subject of parliamentary reform: he urged its necessity in the strongest manner; his opinion was not single, that the peace and tranquillity of the country required it. Parliament did not fairly represent the public sentiment; the people were well aware of this; and, for the purpose of showing the necessity of the measure, he would move for evidence; and proposed this resolution: — "That the returning-officers, town-clerks, or the persons to whom are entrusted the custody of the books of the corporations in the boroughs of this kingdom, do either return to this House a list of the number of the electors in their respective boroughs, and of the qualifications entitling persons to exercise the elective franchise in such boroughs respectively, or do attend this House on this day fortnight, and bring with them such books or papers as may enable them to inform this House respecting the aforesaid particulars."

The motion was opposed by Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Bushe, the Attorney-general (Mr. Wolfe), Mr. Barrington, Mr. Stanley, and Mr. Beresford; it was supported by Mr. Connolly, Mr. Duquery, Mr. Burton Conyngham, and Mr. F. Hutchinson: they maintained, that not merely the tranquillity, but the prosperity of the country required a reform in Parliament; if the books were on the table of the House, they would have evidence for the committee to establish notorious facts relative to the defects in the representation. Mr. Stewart (afterwards Lord Castlereagh) censured the administration for having first granted a committee, and then refusing to enquire; the vices of the system pursued by the government had driven the public mind into a state of agitation; and if the people were suffered to pore over those vices, it would be impossible, in times like these, to foresee what follies they might not adopt.

Mr. GRATTAN said: Sir, Gentlemen object to the motion on three grounds, first, that it is an attack on corporate rights; secondly, that it is an attack on the character of Parliament; and, thirdly, that reform of Parliament at this time is dangerous. As to the first, they have forgotten that the calling for the books of the corporations, is a power which the court of King's Bench daily exercise: may not the grand inquest of the nation do the same? It is exercised when the right of any corporation is questioned, and the meaning of entries in corporation-books is that the proceedings of corporations may be examined: you institute a committee to enquire into the state of your representation; and you tell that committee, that it is not to enquire into the state of the boroughs; and the reason you give is, that the corporation-books, although open to the courts of justice, are to the grand inquest shut. You tell us that we may discover in such a search, not only that the electors are few, but that some of the integral parts of the corporation are destroyed; and, therefore, you say we should not enquire, so that you advance as an argument against proceeding to question decayed boroughs, their possible legal dissolution, as well as their inadequate and defective population. You say, do not enquire as you intended; for if you do, you may find that those boroughs, which return the majority of this House, are actually in law dissolved; and this is your argument to stop, not to quicken the proceedings of this House to reform the representation.

Gentlemen object to this resolution on a second ground; they say it is an attack on the existing constitution of the House of Commons, and they oppose it by assuring you, that the existing constitution is too defective to be discussed, lest, on an examination, you should find the majority of those boroughs who send the majority of this house to Parliament, not only decayed but dissolved; and they add, that an enquiry is unnecessary, because the facts are notorious; and lest you should not know the facts, the gentlemen themselves proclaimed them. They have said that it is notorious that these boroughs do contain very few voters indeed: that the inadequacy of your representation must be acknowledged; and then they desire you not to stir any resolution which questions the excellence of your present existing constitution; so that, according to this reasoning, you are not to enquire into the state of your representation, because its dignity is too sacred, and its defects are too notorious; and this language is accompanied by an exhortation from these gentlemen to impress the people with a respect for the present House of Commons. They have on two different days combated resolutions tending to reform the House of Commons; they

opposed the resolution of a former day, because they preceded enquiry; and they oppose the resolution of this day, because it sets an enquiry on foot; and then they exact of the public credit for their sincerity; in the mean time they call out for a plan; they suggest no plan; but they are waiting on hopes that we may differ about plans, and in that difference forget and extinguish the principle of a reform of Parliament.

They call for a plan, to have more excuses to oppose parliamentary reform; and some of them have spoken out, and have told you plainly and unequivocally that this is no time for stirring the question of reform. This is speaking out; and I say, if you do not obtain the reform now, you will never obtain it at all; this is the time; and, besides other causes, there are two which make the reform at this time indispensable; one cause is the declaration of the minister's connection: and the other cause, his misconduct. On the fifth day of this session, the friends of government declared decisively in favour of the reform of Parliament; the minister in this House voted for a committee to inquire into the state of your representation; which committee was founded on, and could be founded on nothing else, but a supposed defect in the state of that representation; and he accompanied his vote with a declaration that he would not oppose what seemed the general wish. You, therefore, and that part of you which are ministerial, in particular, suggested lively hopes to the people, and so played with their passions on this anxious subject, as to make it impossible for yourselves to retract or retreat.

Shall they make such declarations in parliament, and afterwards charge us with inflaming the people, led by themselves to expect this very measure this very session? I say the declaration of the minister's connection have made the reform of Parliament irresistible; it is made irresistible also by his offences. Have we forgotten how the present ministry came into power? They were made the ministers of the present Lord-lieutenant, because they had been the panders of his predecessor. Have we forgotten how they went about administering to every venal person the wages of corruption? Have we forgotten how, in one stroke, they created fifteen new parliamentary provisions, declared in this House by their friends to have been made for no other purpose than that of buying the members? And do such men talk of the dignity of Parliament. Have we forgotten that other act of theirs; that misdemeanour for which they are impeachable, and of which they are so notoriously guilty, that charged, arraigned, put down publicly and repeatedly, they have not dared to deny it? I mean the sale of peerages for sums of

money, conditioned to be expended for the procuring seats in this House for persons named by the minister; and do these men talk of character? Your charges against us we answer thus; give us our measures, — a fair, honest reform of Parliament being one of them, and we will not oppose you; without place or other emolument whatsoever, patronage or power, we will withdraw our opposition; and this is the best answer to the charge made against our character. And to the defence of your's, I should not have gone at this time into this kind of debate, if the friends of administration had not invited it.

We have heard much of our opposing government. What do those gentlemen mean who talk to us in that idle way? to us who have supported them in the war, in the extraordinary loan, in the new taxes, in the additional military force, in the emigrant bill, and in other measures still more summary and forceable. Do gentlemen mean that we should support government against the people of Ireland, as well as against the French, and with her ministers become a combination against the country.

Persons who are interested in the abuses of government may call every effort to support government nothing, unless it supports also their power and their plunder; but suppose us base enough to support them, as those gentlemen seem to wish, against the reform of Parliament, for instance, we could be of no service to them; for it is that measure which neither we nor they with our assistance could resist; nor any man, nor any power, nor any combination of public men, suppose public men frantic or corrupt enough to combine at such a time against so inestimable an object; and let me warn those ministers not to trifle with the country on this question. Her passions are too alive, her interest too much at stake, her spirit too high, and expectation encouraged by those ministers too sanguine and decided, to permit on their part retreat, or subterfuge, or duplicity, (the usual arts of ministers); they have, your ministers have, by their crimes, made reform necessary, and by their declarations they have proclaimed it to be so. Let them, therefore, look to the tranquillity of the country, and take care they do not disturb it.

I have been long accustomed to hear constitutional measures proclaimed by the *adherents* of government to be seditious, and afterwards, by the same adherents and ministers, acknowledged to be necessary, and voted by themselves into law; and I have seen governments take credit for submitting to such measures, after having libelled for years the measures themselves, and the gentlemen who proposed them. Such will

be the fate of our present ministry; they will adopt some of our measures, some of those which they opposed for three years with every obloquy on the proposers and the proposition; and their only pretensions to credit in a country which they misgoverned for years, will be the adoption of some of the bills which we proposed, and they reprobated. I look upon them in this instance as our agents; they are to execute our will and our plans; our pension bill, they resisted it for three years; they will grant it now; our place bill, they resisted that for three years; they will grant it now; our repeal of the police bill, they resisted that for years; they must grant that also; our responsibility bill, they think to resist that bill, and in the same idle strain as they did the others, but that too must, and will at last be granted.

They may cripple our measures for the present; but our measures will be the law of the land. I could mention more; the reform bill, which they now hope either to evade, or to perplex, or to cripple, or to prevent, that too will be adopted; and then having passed our measures, those gentlemen will, as they do now, libel our characters and traduce their masters; us who have at last taught their folly to listen to measures of wisdom, and their profligacy to attend to the plans of virtue.

The House divided on Mr. Forbes's motion: — Ayes 48, Noes 137; Majority against the motion 89. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Robert Stewart (afterwards Lord Castlereagh) and Col. Hutchinson; tellers for the Noes, the Solicitor-general (Toler) and Mr. J. C. Beresford.

It was then proposed and agreed to, that the House should go into a committee on the subject of reform on that day week.

ROMAN CATHOLIC BILL.

February 22. 1793.

ON the 4th of February, Mr. Hobart had obtained leave to bring in a bill for the further relief of the Roman Catholics: the bill was presented and read a first time on the 18th, and ordered to be read a second time on this day; and when the order of the day for the second reading was moved for, Mr. George Knox said, that from the moment he felt political independence, he found the necessity of Catholic emancipation; the present bill did not admit the Catholics into the constitution; that the upper as well as the lower orders should be the objects for legislative

liberality; and as the admission of ten or twenty Catholics into Parliament would not, in his opinion, endanger the safety of the state, he would move, "That the Roman Catholics should be permitted to hold seats in Parliament." Mr. Knox's motion being inconsistent with the order of proceeding, the bill was read a second time; and on the question that it be committed, it was warmly supported by the provost (Mr. Hutchinson), Mr. Forbes, Mr. Day (afterwards judge), Mr. Hobart, Mr. W. B. Ponsonby, Colonel Hutchinson, and Major Doyle; it was opposed by Mr. Richard Sheridan, Mr. George Ogle, Mr. David Latouche, and Dr. Duigenan.

Mr. GRATTAN said: I could wish the bill under your consideration had gone farther. I could wish that it had given the Roman Catholics the privileges of other dissenters. I am sure that is the only sound policy. I think, however, the bill deserves thanks, because it contains much, and also because it leads to much more; but I must say the mover had discovered more sense if he had given to the Catholics the whole now, and had settled with them for ever.

The situation of the Roman Catholics is reducible to four propositions; they are three-fourths of your people paying their proportion of near 2,000,000*l.* of taxes, without any share in the representation or expenditure; they pay your church establishments without any retributions; they discharge the active and laborious offices of life, manufacture, husbandry and commerce, without those franchises which are annexed to the fruits of industry, and they replenish your armies and navies, without commission, rank or reward. Under these circumstances, and under the further recommendation of total and entire political separation from any foreign prince or pretender, they desire to be admitted to the franchise of the constitution; I have listened to your objections with great respect — give me leave to answer them.

The first objection I heard, is the petition of the Catholics to his Majesty; but, who is there that does not see the question to be, whether the Catholics are aggrieved, and not how those grievances have been stated by their committee? But even on the ground of the petition, if, as in a case of bill and answer, you choose to wrangle, you will find their petition is substantially true; it complains that the Catholic, by law, cannot carry arms: the law is so; it complains that the Catholics, on refusing to discover their arms, are liable to be whipped: that law is yet in force; and, finally, it states, the great and radical grievance, that the Catholics are excluded from the franchises of the constitution; and about that complaint, there is no doubt; the petition, therefore, cannot justify a refusal to administer redress, even if their redress depended

on the manner of forming their petition. But the second objection goes on broader and bolder grounds, and insists on the demerits of the Catholics; it states, that the Catholics abhor all Protestants, and never were, nor are, nor ever will be, loyal subjects to a Protestant King; and it asserts in particular, that in every war, and in two rebellions since the Revolution, the Catholics have exerted themselves to the best of their power against their King and country, and have besides been guilty of various domestic insurrections. The last part of the objection scarcely deserves notice; it proposes that the Catholic inhabitants of thirty-two counties should be punished for the disturbances of six; it proposes that the offences of a local mob should be visited on the community at large, and that the finite offences of that local mob should be punished by the eternal disfranchisement of the community; it makes the crimes of the man the pretext for the prosecution of the sect; it proceeds on a principle that would disfranchise every part of his Majesty's dominions where riots have existed, and almost every great city, the city of London in particular; it proceeds on a principle which argues from the particular to the universal, and which in logic is false reasoning, and in politics is a departure from the principles, not of reason only, but of justice, of humanity, and of charity.

This last part of the objection, I say scarcely requires an answer; the first does; it states, that after the articles of Limerick, the Catholic troops rejected General Ginkle's offer, and almost to a man went to the enemy. This is not history; the fact is otherwise; it has been made to appear already by my honourable friend from undoubted authority, that nineteen regiments of the Catholic army at that time joined King William. The objection proceeds to another misrepresentation, and states that the Irish brigade is constantly recruited and officered from Ireland. The fact is not so. Here again the objection, in matter of fact, totally and notoriously fails. The Irish brigade is not constantly recruited and officered from Ireland; but, on the contrary, few of its officers, and very few of its men are recruited from Ireland. Gentlemen will distinguish between officers of Irish families and of Irish birth, and they will distinguish also between a regiment bearing an Irish name, and a regiment filled with Irishmen. The first is the case of the Irish brigade, and the latter is not; and for the refutation of this part of the objection, I appeal to the knowledge and the candour of gentlemen who have seen service, and who must know the charge, that the Irish brigade is constantly officered and recruited from Ireland, to be abso-

lutely destitute of foundation. The objection proceeds and states that sixteen thousand Irish Catholics fought against Great Britain in the American war. I believe the number of those Irish to be greatly magnified; and sure I am that this description is not just; those Irish were in great numbers Presbyterians of the north, not Catholics of the south; they emigrated in great bodies, and they continue now to emigrate to America from the north of Ireland, not for rebellion, but for land, or a better condition. Your fellow-subjects have emigrated from poverty at home, and sometimes have met war; and if you wish never to meet them in arms in other countries, your method should be to give them a better condition at home. The objection proceeds, and states, that great bodies of Irish fought against England at St. Eustatia and St. Lucia; here again the objection fails in point of fact; great bodies of Irishmen did not fight against England at St. Eustatia and St. Lucia. There was indeed a regiment of eighteen hundred, commanded by General Dillon, the Irish brigade; and this, I suppose, the objector conceives to be those great bodies of Irishmen; but that regiment was chiefly composed of Dutch, and of the recruits of various nations, of very few Irish; and here again I appeal to the gentlemen on the service, whether this part of the objection is not, like the other parts, entirely unfounded. The objection proceeds and states, that the Irish Catholics supply the fleets and armies of the enemies in a much greater proportion than those of Great Britain; this I must positively deny; they supply the fleets and armies of the enemy in a very trifling proportion; and they supply the fleets and armies of Great Britain in a very great and abundant proportion. In the last war, of 80,000 seamen, 50,000 were Irish names; in Chelsea, near one-third of the pensioners were Irish names; in some of the men-of-war almost the whole compliment of men were Irish. With respect to the recruiting service, it is a fact known to the gentlemen of the army, that since they have recruited for the foot in Ireland, the regiments have been filled in a great proportion with Irish Catholics. I do not mean to say, that the Irish Catholics have supplied His Majesty's fleets and armies abundantly; but so abundantly, and in so great a proportion, that the recruiting service could not well go on without them. I appeal again to gentlemen who have seen service, to their knowledge in this particular, and their candour; and I affirm, that this part of the objection, like the other parts, has no foundation whatsoever. The objection proceeds and states, that some of the Protestants are nearly as criminal as the Papists; these Protestants are the

persons who took a part for the emancipation of Ireland, and the objection complains that some of their measures were passed into laws; those measures were the emancipation of the country in 1782, and those ill-affected men were the Parliament, that is, the King, Lords, and Commons, that passed those acts of emancipation; the objection compares the persons concerned therein to the Catholic rebels before the Revolution; and at the same time it represents the Catholics since the Revolution, as well as before, as disaffected: here is the division under which this objection describes His Majesty's subjects; all the Catholics disloyal, and all the Protestants, who lately took part for the emancipation of Ireland, viz. the King, Lords, and Commons, disloyal likewise, more disloyal than the Catholics since the Revolution, and very like those Catholics who, before the Revolution, were executed for rebellion. Thus the objection ends in general defamation and feeble infatuation; a proof how bigotry will extinguish the force of the mind, impair its principles, banish the virtues of the citizen, and the charity of the Christian.

The next objection is, that the Roman Catholics now have every thing short of political power; to which I must observe, that the objection proves two things, an ignorance of the nature of liberty, and the situation of the Catholic; civil and political liberty depend on political power; the community that has no share whatsoever directly or indirectly in political power, has no security for its political or civil liberty. The example of the Catholic is a proof; what deprived him of his civil rights for this century, but the want of political rights, the want of right of representation? What deprived him of the rights of education, of self defence?—a Parliament in which he had no effectual, though for a time, he had a nominal representation. Such a Parliament may take away his wife; it did so: such a Parliament may bastardise his issue; it did so: such a Parliament may enter into his domestic economy, and set on his children to defy the father; it did so. Where then is the utility of attempting to convince the Catholic that he may have in security civil liberty, without any share of political powers, when his present situation is an experimental refutation of that fallacious sophistry, and a proof that no community can long enjoy civil liberty under laws that have excluded them from all share of political power? or, in other words, that no community have a security for civil liberty, when that liberty may be taken away by any body where they have no authority. But it is supposed, the Catholics have civil liberty; certainly they have not; they have not free and unfettered the rights of education; they

have not the full benefit of trial by jury, for they are excluded from petty juries, in some cases, and from grand juries in almost all; and they have not the rights of self-defence, for they cannot carry arms. No man means to say that a license to an individual, at the arbitrary will of a privy council, to carry arms, is a substitute for a right of self-defence; under the law, he is ever liable to be questioned on suspicion of having arms, and subject to an inquisition instituted against the principles of self-defence; he is liable to be whipped if he refuses to make discovery, for the law has not expired; and though his discovery is no evidence against him, yet his refusal is whipping. It is, therefore, trifling to say, that a person so circumstanced has even civil liberty, still less any security for its continuation.

But it is said, he is on the same ground as the exfranchised Protestant, denied, utterly denied; — protestants having property, or the symbol of property, can very generally vote — franchise, that is, freedom of guilds or corporate towns is the symbol of property; but the Protestant who has no property cannot complain that he has no vote; he is a non-proprietor, and of course is not affected by laws taking or regulating property; he is a passenger on your farm, or a guest in your house, and has no pretensions to the regulations thereof; but the Catholic who is a proprietor may complain, because his property is taxed and regulated without his consent. Mr. Byrne complains, he pays to the revenue near 100,000*l.* annually, and has no vote. John Doe has no vote; but he pays nothing; there is no resemblance, therefore, between the enfranchised Protestant and disfranchised Catholic; or, if any, the resemblance is that between a man who is robbed, and a man who has nothing to be robbed of; the man, the profits of whose industry are taken without his consent, and the man who has no industry from whence profits could arise — the difference between a violation of the rights of nature, and none.

The Catholic proprietor appears indeed to be on a level with the Protestant beggar, but is not. The Protestant beggar is one of the community of the legislation, though not a sharer therein; he is of that tribe for whose benefit the laws are made. In this country there are two codes of laws; one for the Protestant sect, another for the Catholic. The legislature has a common interest with the one and against the other. The Protestant beggar has, therefore, an advantage over the Catholic proprietor.

It is objected, they are not fit for freedom. The elective

franchise acts directly on men, not measures. Montesquieu, I need not remind you, observes, that the people are good judges of character, though not always of things. Do you think the Roman Catholics adequate to that? Is there a man in the House who has a name, of whose character they are not fully apprised, who has supported, who has opposed certain measures? The press has made every character a public subject; our conversations are known; our principles of action are very well known. As to the measures, can we suppose the Roman Catholics incapable of judging of them? They are not complicated; the measures of Ireland are domestic regulations.

The fact of their unfitness is not true; but if it were, if they are not rational enough to choose a man to serve in Parliament, how criminal must you have been, who have governed them; and under whose government, for a century, they have not acquired the power to exercise their rational faculties? Your government (supposing the charges to be true, which I utterly deny,) must have been more horrible than the worst of tyrannies; it must have done worse than take away property, life or limb; it must have brutalized your own species. But the truth is otherwise; they are not beasts; you are not tyrants. I can collect from the charge some meaning, though I cannot collect your conclusion; I collect that the Catholics have lived apart from you, and therefore you are inclined to think them an inferior species; and perhaps, though they do not labour under a moral incapacity, yet, from the separation of societies, they have not all your advantages. What then is the evil? The separation. What the cause? The laws. What is the remedy? The repeal of the laws.

The objections at last take the turn of self-defence, and urge that, if you give the elective franchise, you give away the power. No; you gain it; for at present you have it not — the event will be the reverse of your apprehension. The Protestant would not give away the elective franchise; he would get it. The Protestant individual is now a monopolist against a Protestant people. The oligarchy, with the Crown, has the boroughs; the aristocracy has a great portion of the counties. This they call a Protestant ascendancy; but this is a monopoly against a Protestant people. Some of the Protestants have understood it rightly; they have seen that the essence of the elective franchise is, in its extent; that confined, it is the trade of the individual; and, in order to take it back from the individual, and restore it to the Protestant people, it is necessary to multiply the electors, for

yeomen in numbers cannot become property; the borough may; the borough patrons, of whatever religion, will be an aristocracy; the electors, of whatever religion, will be a people. On elections there are three parties, the minister, the aristocracy, and the people. You have thrown out of the scale of the latter a great portion of your own weight, and therefore you are light; restore that portion to the scale of the people, and you will recover that gravity: the effect, therefore, of this participation will be to restore to the Protestant people their elective authority. As an example of your weakness, the whole power of the elective franchise has not created, in the Protestant body, a Protestant ascendancy; far from it; the Protestant electors have not been able to carry a single point for these last ten years, nor any point for these last twenty years, except in 1779 and 1782, when there was other strength to assist your cause, and with it the cordial and active support of the Catholic community. As the church of England's electors have acquired strength, by communicating the franchise to the Presbyterians, so Protestants and Presbyterians acquire force, by communicating the franchise to the Catholics; and, on the same principle, on which the Protestant electors exclude the Catholics, so should that part of them, which is called the church of England, exclude the Presbyterians. The Parliament, and its electors, would then preserve what they now depart from; unity of religion, and destroy unity of interest. In a few words, this objection says, that, in order to preserve the power of a Protestant people, we should take precaution, that we may be no people at all. This objection is entirely blind to the present progress of things, and does not see that the tendency, if it is not to Deism, most undoubtedly it is not to Popery. This objection gives no credit to the operation of association, on the repeal of the penal code; it allows nothing for the growth of liberal opinion; it does not conceive the possibility of a political conformity; it cannot conceive one political attachment in society, whose members, as is the case of every society, entertain their different notions on subjects of religion. The objection, on the whole, is founded on this position, that two sects will retain the animosity of the provocation, after the provocation is removed. The objection goes farther; it says, that if the Catholics get the franchise, they will, at length, get such power in the House of Commons, as to repeal the act of settlement, reverse the outlawries, and subvert the Protestant church. With regard to the first, there would be a difficulty, somewhat approaching to an impossibility; for, if those outlawries were set aside,

and the act repealed, the estates would remain exactly where they are. The title being now, by time, another operation would be necessary; the Parliament should attaint every present proprietor; but that would not do; a further operation is necessary; the Parliament should find out the lawful heir of the old proprietors, which, I apprehend, would be impossible; but, exclusive of the impossibility of the event, I will endeavour to give the imaginary fears of gentlemen, other reasons. Before the Catholics could have power to repeal the act of settlement and reverse the outlawries, they must be the Parliament; and before they become the Parliament, they must be the landed proprietors of the kingdom. In that event, it is impossible to say what they will do; but it is obvious to say what they will not do; they will not change the state of landed property. In further answer, it is almost unnecessary to repeat, that there are no Catholics now making claim; that the Catholics have solemnly renounced it; that they desire you to propound your own terms of renunciation; that the number who could trace a claim, is next to nothing; and that the number of Catholics, interested in the present state of landed property, by mortgage, purchase, and otherwise, is the majority of the principal members of their community. But, though it is unnecessary to urge this now, yet there is another thing, which cannot be too strongly impressed on you; that, in the present state of Catholic depression, Protestant property is very much in danger.

Witness the funds, whose fall is a proof how much you are one interest, and what a portion of that interest is the Catholics. Do you tremble at a visionary claim; and are you insensible and stupid to an existing diminution of your property, real or personal? The second objection is that the church establishment will be subverted. I see no reason why the church should be more in danger from the Catholics than from the Presbyterians, who, in Ireland, are the majority of the Protestants. If the church is in danger, it is from the times, not from the Catholics; and I know of nothing so likely to increase that danger, as an opposition on the part of the church to the liberty of three parts of the island. To insist on a system of taxation without representation, in order to secure a system of tithe, without consolation, would be to hazard both; but to shake the latter in a time of some speculation on the subject of church emoluments, the best policy is to make those emoluments reconcileable to other interests and passions.

I have considered the objections to Catholic *freedom*. I

will now consider the code of Catholic depression. I will begin with the beginning, and where you should have begun;—with education. Respecting this part of the subject, your present laws are criminal on three grounds; they refuse a degree to the Catholic in the university, and establishing a separation at the time in which friendships and sympathies are formed, ordain a species of anti-fraternity by act of Parliament, excluding him from the right of education in your university, they exclude him from the right of endowing an university for educating himself; that is, they impose ignorance by act of Parliament, unless where they ensure a third mischief, — foreign education; from this original error the law advances to more.

They have permitted intermarriage as politic; but they have made it subject to the highest penalty (not only as impolitic, but as criminal); that association, which is the parent of every other, and leads directly to mass and mingle into one people, they have punished and deterred by disqualification. Thus they have ordained separation on propagation, and have gone to the origin of things, to sow the seed of mischief there. They have attempted to make two moulds for the human species, transmitting to posterity opposite characteristics of implacable weakness, and inveterate and malignant folly. They have introduced into the religion of the Christians the tyranny which disgraces the Gentoos, and which they also call religion; they have cut and carved the human species into distinct casts of perpetual incommunication, stopping the circulation of the human blood, in order to preserve his pride, his folly, and his imbecility. Did you find that nature suggested a hint to your laws, by stopping the pregnant consequences of such intermarriages, or by muling the issue of the first degree, then I would allow that the consent of the mother and father, in one precise organization of faith, was essential to human propagation. But here the honesty of nature derides the madness of the statute, and the wisdom of your instinct corrects the folly of law. You have made a separation between the sects in an instance where an intercourse was rendered necessary, not only by your real interest, but your idle fears, — because that marriage which you deterred, confounds those claims which you effect to tremble at, and blends Catholic pretensions with Protestant titles, while it makes Catholic numbers administer to Protestant population, and physically and politically would, if your state of mind admitted of benefit, do you service. Your late act seemed sensible of this, and therefore permitted the marriage, but permitted it under the penalty of disqualification;

that is, the law authorises the act, and punishes it. The law has a glimmering sense of its own folly, and goes a little way, just as in cases where the mind has a sense of what is wrong, without a love of what is right. Your law establishes the principle of intermarriages, and then impeaches its own principle; it at once authorised and discredited; and to complete the folly of the act, the punishment you inflict is to fall exclusively on those of your own persuasion. The Roman Catholic husband is not punished for the intermarriage with a Prostestant, but the Protestant husband is disqualified for the intermarriage with a Papist. If a Protestant adds Catholic claim and Catholic property to the Protestant community, he loses the rank of a citizen, and the community of which he is a member loses also a portion of its constitutional strength; and the number of Protestant electors, of whose paucity you complain, is rendered still less, by doing an act which you affect to encourage. Thus, in every step of the progress, you yourselves are punished; you are punished as individuals, by disqualifications and as a free community, by diminution. In order to palliate your own disfranchisement to your own people, you are obliged to depreciate the value of franchise; in order to reconcile your permission to your penalty, and your penalty to your permission; you are obliged to aggravate the condition of intermarriage which you permit, and to depreciate the condition of freedom, which you affect to hold inestimable. Such unhappy effects are the result of an unascertained and ill-assured mind in the legislature that devises the law. Struggling with reason, and compromising with folly, it makes the law a monster — a permission with prohibition. Your law says, remove this inhuman and impolitic separation; unite, intermarry; the law adds, if you do, I will drive you out of the pale of the constitution! The motive to all these inconsistencies is as inconsistent and weak as the inconsistencies themselves.

We lay it down as a maxim of government, that the theology of the wife as well as the husband, is a subject of penal law, moral depravity is out of the question: her theology is what the state investigates, and yet she may be a Pagan as well as a profligate, but she must not be Christian of the Catholic communion; she may worship Jove, or Venus, or Mahomet, — but Christ! if she worships him according to the Catholic ritual, she is supposed to entertain principles hostile to the state, and to poison — what? — the purity of her husband's politics in matters of elections! And lest he should vote for an improper Protestant, we strive, by the law, to make him a Papist; for we take away from him one great

motive for continuing a Protestant, the right of citizenship. We send him from the society of the franchised Protestant; and, of course, force him into that of the Papist. Conceived in the same spirit of selfish folly is that part of the code which affects to regulate the medical art, rules of persecution, and so regulates that art, as to refuse any degree of professorship therein to three-fourths of the community. This is a combination against the sick, Protestant as well as Papist. How would you have exclaimed if any one had combined against your luxury, as you yourselves have combined against your health, and had said that no man should have a licence to exercise the art of a cook, unless a Protestant? Suppose you had said no Englishman shall have a licence, no Scotchman shall have a licence; there are some who would not live to refuse unto their own countrymen the same privilege; if a man's life is attacked by a robber, the law has not said, let no man save him but a Protestant; but the law does say, if a man's life be attacked by disease, we authorise no man to save him but a protestant; that is, we refuse to three-fourths of our countrymen a licence to administer to the health of one another. Now the chance of medical ability is according (in the same place) to the number of persons who may furnish practitioners; by your restriction, that chance you decrease, and in the same proportion increase the chances of mortality; and this depredation on your healths you commit in the name of religion; you diminish the foundation of your liberty, and you attack the sources of your existence, the better to promote your power and ascendancy.

I know I shall be told that they practise in Ireland. There are instances, I allow, but it is under a licence got in other countries. You have not prevented the practice under these restrictions, because that was too strong for your humanity; nor given the licence, because that was too strong for your prejudices; you of course have annexed to Catholic practitioners a clause of foreign education; you certainly do tolerate their practice, but under circumstances that amount to an entire discouragement, if not intoleration: no licence to practice; of the five no one professorship; of all the places in hospitals, so necessary for experimental knowledge, not one; these chairs are made so many jobs for protestant practitioners.

If Doctor Purcel saves the lives of His Majesty's Protestant subjects it is not our fault; we have given such sort of men no sort of encouragement in such practices; we allowed him no professorship, gave no licence, no countenance; let him and his patients pay their vows to some other country. I have

already dwelt upon the importance of the military profession. I have showed how constantly you connived at the breach of your own law. The question is not whether the Catholic shall serve in the army; but shall serve in the army only when you want him, and he gets nothing by it; as a common soldier, getting sixpence per day, it seems he is safe — as an officer, getting a livelihood, dangerous; that you should monopolize his blood and your own honours and emoluments, it is a condition too unequal to be lasting; they are fit to be entrusted with arms we say, therefore they may be soldiers; they are not fit to be entrusted with arms we say, therefore, they may not be officers; but the better order of Catholics we rely on, it is the lower order we suspect; therefore, the better may not, and the lower order may be received in our army. The extending this disqualification even to a prohibition, on their carrying arms, is another severity. Is it to say, we are afraid we have injured you too much, to suffer you to carry arms even for your own defence? It is a prohibition of conscious severity, useless, because constantly broken, and meritoriously departed from by yourselves, who arm Catholic servants against your own laws, as you arm Catholic soldiers against your enemies and against your law, which in this instance is your greatest enemy? A Protestant gentleman wants to go home late in the evening; that is a good reason for arming a Catholic against law; a Catholic farmer wants to preserve his life and property; that is no reason for arming him according to law; you use, in this particular, the laws as your sport, and the Papists as your property; they may arm as your servants and as your mercenaries, but not as citizens; thus by our connivance as individuals, and severity as legislators, are they encouraged to despise the laws, and to hate them. I have shown already, that this law, prohibitory on carrying arms, is not observed, and cannot be observed; what more can the state take away than the robber? Unless the penalty is made something more than the loss of property and life, men will carry arms to defend both.

That part of your code which disables the Roman Catholic from sitting on grand juries, except, and so forth, is like every other part, liable to great objections; it subjects three millions to be taxed without their consent by the grand jury, who are already taxed without their consent by the Parliament, and is a second flagrant breach of the great charter. To the Catholic that charter is a grievance; it is light to a blind man. You tax three millions, not only for the state, but for every road presentment, robbery petition, illicit still, the abuse and extravagance of which grants is to you a complaint; the use as

well as the abuse is to him a grievance. This is a great aggravation of public taxes; it is a home-felt tyrant, that brings to his door the little vexations and fretful tyranny of a superior, and makes him insignificant in his own farms, and under his own vine, and touches him in those lesser nerves where he is less mortal but extremely irritable; and here you subject him to where the partial distributions of justice in a tribunal tax him without his consent, and try him without his peers, where he has no peers, and his adversary may have votes; and as the oppression is great, so is the motive little; it is a monopoly of jobbing. You do not exclude him entirely from the petty jury, which is a function much more interesting to Protestant life and property, but which is trouble without county patronage or county power. As the object is monopoly, so, as usual, the pretext is religion; that exclusion which you impose in the case of juries, you impose in the case of magistracy; and though with less oppression, with as little pretence;—3,000,000 of your fellow-subjects are to have no share whatsoever in the execution of the law, no more than they have in the formation of it—over the whole extent of your country; and of 4,000,000 of people, you exclude 3,000,000 from the function of enforcing obedience to the law. As you have taken care that liberty, so have you taken care that law, shall have no very general extension in your island. You have here, as usual, punished the Protestant the better to disable the influence of the Papist; and no Protestant married to a Papist can be a justice of peace. I have heard your reasons; a Catholic should not be a magistrate in Ireland, because the laws contain a code which is against him; that is, the law is his enemy; and yet we talk of the lawlessness of the common people, just as we talk of the blessings of our most excellent constitution, excluding them from any share in the law, or any participation in the constitution. What makes the subject love the law not the hangman? Pains and penalties may be the objects of terror, but not of affection; he loves the law because he has a share in the formation and execution of it; the men who are reconciled to taxes are those who vote; and the men who are reconciled to penalties are those who enact them; and the men who are friends to a rigid execution of a law, is the community that furnishes juries to find bills, judges to sentence, and magistrates to execute. The relation in which the Protestant stands, makes him a party to the laws; the relation in which the Catholic stands, makes him the object of the law; not party. He is not a party to the law, and the law is a party against him; therefore the laws may be objects of his obedience not his affection. This, then, is their situation; and this situation

explains the liberality of those who say, they offer them every thing except the privilege of becoming part of the state; every thing except a part of the electoral community; every thing except a part of the legislative community; every thing except a part of the judicial community; every thing except a part of the corporative community; every thing except a part of the executive community—that is, a species of excommunity, with privileges to acquire property, for you to tax without their consent! Thus are the Catholics by the present code excluded from an interest in your laws; they are also excluded from communication with your persons; the society of marriage punished; the society of education forbidden; the society of civil employment forbidden; the society of military employment forbidden; the society of parliament forbidden; the society of election forbidden; the society of grand jury forbidden; the society of magistracy forbidden; there is no subject of public care, in which they can associate with the Protestant without breach of law, no subject of conversation, except foreign politics, foreign changes, and foreign revolutions!

We have declared, we hope to become one people; how? By these lines of circumvallation, erasing the natural geography of your country, and setting up parallels and circles of folly and superstition, from the marriage bed to the cradle, from cradle to college, and from college to the grave, are two nations that cannot by any public interest or business, or by any general call, save that of death, be brought together? There have been three policies observed, with respect to the Catholics, the first was that of Cromwell,—extermination by operation of the sword! the second was that of Anne,—extermination by operation of the laws! and the third was your's—which allowed them a qualified existence! Though the two former were cruel, yet both were consistent. They both considered Papists as criminals, and exercised over them the right of conquest. They considered the Catholics as a body who were neither to have the power, nor property, nor any public existence in your country. The laws of Ireland prevented them from acquiring property in land; and the usurpations of England prevented either them or the Protestants from acquiring any considerable property by commerce. But the third policy, much milder than either, is more extragavant than both—your policy. You allow them schools, seminaries, and colleges, but distinct from our own, and without funds; marriage, but marriage attended with pains and penalties; a free trade without franchise, and land without a vote. Let us discuss how far this policy is consistent with the interest of the constitution, the King or

the British empire. I will suppose under your laws the Catholics purchased considerable tracts of land. The land so purchased is unrepresented. Just as the wealth of your country grows, the extent of your constitution contracts. I will suppose these men become a great commercial body; a great portion of commercial interest, as well as the landed, is unrepresented; and your constitution still more contracted. What a portion of the strength of the country must, in that event, be taxed, without the consent of its owners! Your constitution will be no longer a representation, either of property or population; so that the British constitution will be worked out of the island by operation of law. Who will answer for the patience of that strength, compounded of a great portion of wealth, as well as of numbers? Who will answer for the satisfaction of those proprietors? It is not life but the condition of living; the slave is not so likely to complain of the want of property, as the proprietor, of the want of privilege. The human mind is progressive; the child does not look back to the parent that gave him being, nor the proprietor to the people that gave him the power of acquisition, but both look forward; the one to provide for the comforts of life, and the other to obtain all the privileges of property.

Your imperfect grants and comprehensive theories have given those aspiring thoughts, and let in that train of ideas which may hereafter greatly serve, or marvellously distract your country; you have already given to their minds the first principles of motion, and the laws of motion now must direct the machine.

The germ on the soul, like the child in the womb, or the seed in the earth, swell in their stated time to their destined proportions by virtue of their own laws, which we neither make nor controul. Talk not in such cases of gratitude; rely on that gratitude which is founded on interest; such gratitude as governed yourselves from 1691, when you secured your property, to 1779, when you demanded your trade; and 1782, when you demanded your liberty; from a colony looking only to property, to a people looking to a free form of government; from planters joining with the mother country against the Catholics, to a nation joining with the Catholics to exact of the mother country trade and freedom. Do I condemn you; such is the progress of nations; such the nature of man, and such is gratitude! Let me now consider how far this policy is consistent with the interest of His Majesty. It has been said, that under a Protestant monarch, the Catholic ought never have the elective franchise; thus gentlemen have

attempted to annex the curse of Catholic slavery to the person of the King. They have gone a step farther, and have supposed the coronation oath goes against the present claims of the Catholics, and have thus represented the King as sworn against the liberties of his people. They have done this on a surmise, the statement of which would excite our scorn, if its consequence did not produce our apprehensions that men believing in the real presence cannot be well affected to the house of Hanover; they have urged this when the pretender was extinct, when the power of the Pope was extinct, and when the sting of Catholic faith was drawn; they have done this when a new enthusiasm had gone forth in the place of religion, much more adverse to kings than Popery, and infinitely more prevailing,—the spirit of republicanism. At such a time, they have chosen to make the Catholics outcasts of a Protestant monarchy, and leave them no option but a republic; such a policy and such argument tend to make Irish Catholics French republicans; they aid the cause of proselytism against the cause of kings; they would drive the Roman Catholics from the hustings, where they might vote without danger, and would send them to plant the tree of liberty on their own hills, where treason, foreign and domestic, may intrigue in a body kept vacant for all the floating poison of the times, to catch and propagate; a school for the discontents of both countries, and the foreign emissaries, who need not bring any other manifesto than your own code and your own resolutions.

I differ much from those who say that the Roman Catholic cannot, under a Protestant King, enjoy the franchises of the constitution; I should say directly the reverse; that under no government can the franchises of the constitution be communicated so effectually, and secured so permanently to all His Majesty's subjects, as under our present monarchical government. The time is come, when every loyal subject should be free, and every free subject loyal. It is true, the Roman Catholics will now be your fellow-subjects, but not your subjects; they will be subjects of the King, and not the slaves of subjects, who stood, with regard to them, in the place of kings. Do you lament the change? I congratulate you upon it; the Basha will not command the cringe of the peasant's knee, but the King will command the strength of it. You appropriate this great body of men to the throne; you put the stamp of the King upon them, and serve the Crown more by far than when you vote for his minister. Let me consider this policy in its relation to the British empire. Britain, you know, governs you no longer; it is not your

religious arrangement that interests her, but your physical strength. You do not mean to say that the Catholics cannot be faithful in their connection with Great Britain. I appeal to those officers who served with them in the last war; their religion surely cannot now make them adverse; the Roman Catholic religion resembles much more the church of England than the church of France, their dissent cannot make them adverse. You say the Catholics are not as well disposed as the Protestants, because they are not descended from the English; many of them are; but nations have neither a parent's nor a child's affection; like the eagle, they dismiss their young and know them no longer. I know not whether the Roman Catholics are as well disposed to Great Britain as the Protestants are; but I am sure they are at least as well disposed as the Protestants would be, if they were deprived of civil and political advantages. If you doubt their disposition, do you dispose them better. You are trustees to preserve to Great Britain the physical force of the Catholics of Ireland, and nothing but you can forfeit it; not religion, not the Pope, not the pretender, but your proscription, which argues that the franchise of the Catholic is incompatible with British connection, and of course teaches the Catholic to argue that the British connection is incompatible with Catholic liberty. Thus you would deprive Great Britain of her resources, in recruiting army and navy, but you will supply their place; how? One million; after filling all the places in church and state, will spare the overplus of their numbers. You will borrow from the loom, and send the weaver of the north into the ranks. But this is a partial statement for you; instead of affording one million to Great Britain, you must borrow men from Great Britain to defend and garrison yourselves. Calculate, then, that in persisting to disfranchise the Catholic, you make him adverse; three millions are to be put into the other scale, which would be a difference of six millions, that is nearly one half of the whole empire. It follows from this, that your policy is prejudicial to the British empire as well as to the throne.

I have considered your situation and your arguments. A situation of extraordinary peril. Arguments of extraordinary weakness, of monopoly, of panic, of prejudice, of any thing but religion; arguments which, like the fabric they would sustain, cannot stand the proof of any trial; nor the principles of morality, not those of religion, nor those of policy, nor those of constitution; neither the touch of time nor the revolutions of mankind; their tendency is to make freedom a monopoly, which is like an endeavour to make the air and the

light a monopoly; their tendency is to make God a monopoly. I have heard of monopolies of salt, monopolies of rice, monopolies of corn, but here is a monopoly of the Almighty; and yet the persons who use these arguments are men of talents. Compare, compound, abstract; but, in this instance, the string of their madness, so strangely perplexed in the intellectual function, one should think God had smitten the intellect of the country, as well as her fortunes, with some distinguished imbecility. Suppose a will impeached for insanity, and it appeared in evidence that the testator had, in his capacity as a general officer, taken powder and ball from one half of his battalion, because they believed in the real presence, or, when sick, had refused to take a specific from Dr. Purcel, declaring he had confidence in his medicine, but had no faith in his sacrament; or had disinherited his own son because his son's wife did not understand theology; or had fallen on his knees to return thanks to God for his universal blessings, and then had risen up and dealt out imprecations on three-fourths of the people about him; or proclaimed that as long as a Protestant prince was on the throne, three-fourths of his subjects should be disfranchised. Would not that evidence, which is nothing more than a compound of your piety and your policy, if applied to the case of an individual, compel twelve honest men, on their oaths, to find a verdict of insanity?

I have read of a republic, where the whole business of life was neglected to give place to mathematical investigation. I can suppose a more extraordinary state, where the law excluded from serving the public three-fourths of the people, unless they would give a theological opinion touching an abstract point of divinity, and verify that opinion on oath. I have heard of Athens, that cruel republic, excluding so many of her own children from the rights of citizenship; but she had only the wisdom of Socrates and the light of Plato: she had not, like you, revelation to instruct her; besides, she had not the press — she had not the benefits of your lesson. What lesson? that to a people it is not life, but the condition of living; and that to be bound without your own consent, was to be a slave; and, therefore, you were not satisfied in 1782 with the free exercise of your religion. However I do not rely on your private productions. What are your public tracts, your repeated addresses to the King, the Speaker's annual speech to the throne? what are they, while the penal code remains, but so many dangerous and inflammatory publications, felicitating the Protestants on the blessings of that Constitution from whence three-fourths of your people are

excluded; but, above all, that instrument, infinitely more incendiary than all Mr. Paine has written, that instrument which you annually vote; what is it but a challenge to rebellion? I mean a money bill, wherein you dispose of the money of 3,000,000 of the people without their consent. You do not stir, nor vote, nor speak, without suggesting to the Catholics some motive; either the provocation of your blessings or the poison of your free principles; some motive, I say, which is fatal to that state of quietude wherein, during this age of discussion, you must enlay your people in order to give your government the chance of repose.

You are struggling with difficulties you imagine; you are mistaken; you are struggling with impossibilities. To enchain the mind, to case in the volatile essential soul, nor tower, nor dungeon, much less Parliament, can be retentive of those fires kindled by yourselves in the breasts of your fellow-subjects. I would have you at this time distrust that religious vanity which tells you that these men are not fit for freedom; they have answered that vanity in a strain of oratory peculiar to the oppressed. It is the error of sects to value themselves more upon their differences than their religion; and in these differences, in which they forget the principles of their religions, they imagine they have discovered the mystery of salvation; and to this supposed discovery they have offered human sacrifices. What human sacrifices have we offered? the dearest; the liberties of our fellow-subjects. Distrust again that fallacious policy which tells you your power is advanced by their bondage; it is not your power, but your punishment; it is liberty without energy; you know it. It presents you with a monopoly; and the monopoly of others, not your own. It presents you with the image of a monster in a state where the heart gives no circulation, and the limbs receive no life; a nominal representative, and a nominal people. Call not this your misfortune; it is your sentence; it is your execution. Never could the law of nature suffer one set of men to take away the liberty of another, and that of a numerous part of their people, without a diminution of their own strength and freedom. But, in making laws on the subject of religion, legislators forget mankind until their own distraction admonishes them of two truths; the one that there is a God; the other that there is a people. Never was it permitted to any nation; they may perplex their understandings with various apologies, but never was it long permitted to exclude from essential, from what they themselves have pronounced essential blessings, a great portion of themselves for periods of time, and for no reason, or what is worse, for such reason as you have advanced.

Conquerors, or tyrants proceeding from conquerors, have scarcely ever for any length of time governed by those partial disabilities; but a people so to govern itself, or rather, under the name of government, so to exclude itself, the industrious, the opulent, the useful; that part that feeds you with its industry, and supplies you with its taxes, weaves that you may wear, and ploughs that you may eat: to exclude a body so useful, so numerous, and that for ever; and, in the mean time, to tax them *ad libitum*, and occasionally to pledge their lives and fortunes! for what? For their disfranchisement. It cannot be done; continue it, and you expect from your laws what it were blasphemy to ask of your Maker. Such a policy always turns on the inventor, and bruises him under the stroke of the sceptre or the sword, or sinks him under accumulation of debt and loss of dominion. Need I go to instances? What was the case of Ireland, enslaved for a century, and withered and blasted with her Protestant ascendancy, like a shattered oak scathed on its hill by the fires of its own intolerance. What lost England America, but such a policy? An attempt to bind men by a Parliament wherein they are not represented; such an attempt as some would now continue to practise on the Catholics, and involve England. What was it saved Ireland to England but the contrary policy? I have seen these principles of liberty verified by yourselves. I have heard addresses from counties and cities here on the subject of the slave-trade to Mr. Wilberforce, thanking him for his efforts to set free a distressed people; has your pity traversed leagues of sea to sit down by the black boy on the coast of Guinea; and have you forgot the man at home by your side, your brother? Come then, and by one great act cancel this code, and prepare your mind for that bright order of time which now seems to touch your condition." But I have tired you; suffer me to sit down, and thank you for your patient attention.

The question that the bill be committed was then carried with only one dissentient voice.

ROMAN CATHOLIC BILL.

February 27. 1793.

THE House resolved itself into a committee on the Roman Catholic Bill, Mr. Day in the chair. Doctor Duigenan opposed the bill; and after a speech, which he concluded by saying, "If the bill passed he would fly to England for refuge," he moved

the following amendment:—"That no Roman Catholic shall vote in any county for any member to sit in Parliament, unless such Roman Catholic shall have a freehold of 20*l.* a year value in said county; or in any borough, unless he have a freehold of 20*l.* a-year (any where in the kingdom), or is possessed of property to the amount of 1000*l.*"

The amendment was opposed by Mr. Perry, Mr. Hobart, Mr. Ponsonby, Mr. Blake, and Mr. F. Hutchinson. Mr. Vandeleur opposed the bill, and moved an amendment, "That 10*l.* be the qualification instead of 20*l.* per annum; and that the words 'one thousand pounds' personal property be left out." The bill was also opposed by Mr. David Latouche, Mr. Ogle, Mr. R. Stewart (Lord Castlereagh), Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Alexander, Sir John Blaquiere, and the Speaker (Mr. Foster), who went at length into the subject of the bill, which he considered as a change in the constitution of the country, and as leading inevitably to the destruction of the church establishment: he contended, that if the Catholics were admitted to the rights of the elective franchise, they must be admitted to the right of representation; and the ultimate consequence would be the overthrow of the Protestant church, the dethronement of the House of Hanover, and a total separation from Great Britain.

Mr. GRATTAN said: Sir, the authority of the right honourable member requires an answer. He states, that the internal situation of this country does not require any change in the penal law; he describes that internal situation to be the fall of stock, the stagnation of public credit, and the impossibility of raising, on public security, a loan at less than five per cent., which before could have been obtained at three and a half; and the right honourable member adds, that this decline does not proceed from foreign contingencies, but domestic alarms; those alarms he explains to be an apprehension lest the Roman Catholic should get the elective franchise. The fall of the funds took place in the month of November, long before any decision in favour of the claim of the Catholics, before the presenting their petition, and at a time when their chance appeared to be despaired of. I refer to the chronicles of the time, and the recollection of every gentleman who hears me; it follows, that whatever might be the cause of the fall of the funds, it is not that cause which the right honourable gentleman has ascribed,—the prospect of Catholic emancipation; but, on the contrary, it seems to be an opposite cause, the despair of it. The conflict that might ensue from an obstinate bigotry on one side, and as obstinate a spirit of liberty on the other; and, from this event, we should collect something very different from what has occurred to the right honourable member, namely, that the Catholic

body in Ireland are now too important, and too wealthy, to be excluded from the franchises of the constitution, without an immediate injury to the public credit; and that the internal situation of the country did require, and does require, a very material change in the laws which respect Roman Catholics. And if any further proof of it was necessary, if it was necessary to adduce any thing more to show that the prospect of Catholic emancipation did not lower the funds, I ask whether the rejection of this bill will raise them? Whether the refusal to give the Catholics the elective franchise, and the other privileges of the bill, will raise bank stock from its present depreciation to 172? on the contrary, would it not depreciate stock even below its present fall, if that then would be the case? I need not press the right honourable gentleman more on this part of his argument. He has been pleased to observe, that the Catholic cannot claim the franchise as matter of right; it is of no consequence in what quality he claims it; that is an abstract question, unnecessary for your consideration, or this time: the elective franchise, whether an inherent right or otherwise, he claims as essential to his civil and political liberty; and in so doing he has the authority of Protestant writers and Protestant proceedings. But the right honourable gentleman, so far from considering the elective franchise as an inherent right, tells you, the legislature has repeatedly governed and controuled that franchise: and he instances two particulars, the act of Henry VI. which confined the right of voting to freeholders having less than 40*s.*, and the act of registry. I apprehend that these acts, and most of the acts that touch the elective franchise, election laws among others, proceed on the principle of regulating the right, but not of extinguishing it; and though, on some occasions they have, in a degree, impaired it, yet the principle of those bills, like the bills of reform, was to render it, bonâ fide and substantially, more efficacious; it was the reverse of extinguishment; from such laws we have, therefore, no right to infer any rule against the principle they profess, and in favour of the violence they may commit, by departing from their own principle; and I affirm that we cannot, from any authority of any respect, collect such a principle in the constitution that would warrant any gentleman in asserting, that Parliament may, constitutionally, disfranchise a vast proportion of the electors of the kingdom.

The right honourable member*, to weaken the Catholic claims to the elective franchise, under colour of right, has told you they had not such a privilege since the Revolution; and

* The Speaker.

he exposes the error of those who supposed they did not lose that right till the year 1746. The reasons he has given for entertaining that opinion I must be permitted to question. The first proof which the member adduces to show the Roman Catholics lost the elective franchise immediately after the Revolution, is not a law, but a resolution of the House of Commons, a resolution declaring the Roman Catholics had no right to vote. A House of Commons attempting, by its own resolution, to impose legal incapacities on its own constituents, only proves how little its sense was of law or constitution; but with respect to the legal right of franchise of the Catholic, proves nothing; they leave the law just where they found it. From this precedent nothing can be collected, except the lawless violence of a House of Commons against the legal right of the Catholics.

The next proof adduced by the right honourable member to establish legal disability, is another resolution of the House of Commons, equally violent and equally lawless. It is a case in the year 1709, where they try the merits of a contested election, and resolve that the candidate who had the minority of votes was duly elected, and the ground of this lawless decision was, that the majority on the election was composed of Papists. Here is another instance of an attempt in one branch of legislature to create legal disabilities by its own arbitrary resolutions; a proceeding which forms the strongest presumption against the character of the times and of that of the House of Commons, but none against the rights of Catholics; and both these instances prove the violence of the governing party against the Catholics, and that where the law fell short they did not want arbitrary power, in the shape of resolutions, to extinguish and oppress them. It was in consequence of a train of such precedents as then quoted by the right honourable member; precedents wherein the House of Commons, instead of determining contested elections according to law, set up their own resolutions against law; that at last the general indignation of both countries, and the self-conviction of the House of Commons, inclined the latter to surrender to a jury on their oaths, a power which the House had so repeatedly abused.

The right honourable member has endeavoured to support his position by much better authority than the resolution of one part of the legislature. To prove that the Catholics had lost the elective franchise before 1746, he alludes to the act of Anne which imposes on the Catholic a qualification for voting, namely — the oaths of allegiance and abjuration. This act does not bespeak that they had lost their franchise, but the contrary, that they were in possession of it; and as it finds them

in possession, so it leaves them, with this provision, that they shall swear allegiance to the King, and abjure the Pretender. And the Catholics having in numbers conformed to the requisites of this act, the 19th of the late King comes, and was the first act imposing legal disfranchisement. It has been adduced by the right honourable gentleman as otherwise, and represented as an act for the better effectuating disabilities before intended, from which I collect something very little to the credit of those times. I must collect, that those who formed the act of Anne, imposing the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, conceived that the Catholics would not take them, and so would be disqualified from voting at elections; but subsequent legislators, finding the Roman Catholics took the oaths, proceeded to carry the intention into full effect, by an absolute and flat disqualification. Thus the circumstance which was an evidence of their loyalty became a cause of their disqualification. I say, if the interpretation can be annexed to the preamble of the last mentioned act, which the right honourable member suggests, it remains for us to collect nothing less than I have stated, and something much stronger, against the moderation of the Protestants, than against the claims of the Catholics.

The right honourable member has said, that were he forced to abandon the point of right, he can combat the Catholic claims on the ground of policy, and he informs you, that Catholics, if they obtain the elective franchise, will naturally advance, until at last they subvert the Protestant government in church and state, and finally separate this country from Great Britain. An opinion of so alarming a nature would require some argument, either in principle or precedent, to support it. The present has only the very high authority of the right honourable member; a very high authority certainly, which however in the present instance, I think may be combated by general principles and particular cases. I apprehend the ground of the member's alarm to be a supposition, that no sect will be content with toleration, liberty, or power, but will hazard them all in order to establish its own church; or, in other words, will hazard liberty and property to pay tithe to its own clergy; that such might have been the folly of sects formerly I might perhaps allow, but that it is now their folly, or that it was ever their interest, I deny. Far from thinking with the great authority of the right honourable member, that a Protestant government and church is best secured by excluding from the franchises of the constitution three-fourths of your people to whom you have already given the power of property, I think the best method of securing that state and

that church, is to give the three-fourths an interest not only in its settlement of property, but its liberty and its government; and as in 1778, you thought your own property strengthened by giving the Catholics the rights of purchase, so by the same principle should you now think your constitution strengthened by giving the Catholic the right of voting: in order to attach them to your act of settlement, you gave them an interest in your land; in order to attach them to your freedom, you must give them an interest in your constitution. Having given a common interest in the settlement of your property, and in your civil and political liberty, I cannot see the force of that apprehension which conceives they will hazard these interests for an object, which is not an interest but a charge, the payment of tithe to their own priesthood. I can conceive a sect exercising its power to promote its interest, but there is a point where interest ceases. The Catholics will use the power they get by property to obtain civil and political liberty, because that property is not secure, nor their condition free without it; but it does not follow, as the right honourable gentleman imagines, that the Catholics will also exercise the power they got by liberty to establish their church, because their property is as secure, and their civil and political freedom as complete without it; because the establishment of their church would be a charge, not an advantage, and is an object more of their superstition, than of their interest; superstition, which is transitory and now decayed; interest, which is uniform and immortal.

The principles of action, therefore, in these cases are different, and therefore similar consequences cannot be drawn from them; but sure I am, if there is any danger to church and state, that there is much less danger when three-fourths of the inhabitants are separated from its church only, than when they are separated from the church and the constitution; when there is one motive only, and that a motive that every day weakens to detach them from the establishment, instead of every motive that usually, and now so peculiarly operates on the human mind. To the principle I advance, I presume to add instances; what is the case of the Presbyterians, perhaps the majority of the Protestants, separated from your church, and incorporated in your constitution? Why have not they exercised political power to establish their church? Have they a better disposition to your hierarchy, or a greater interest in tithe than the Catholic? But there is another living instance to disprove the opinion of the right honourable member; it is the instance of Canada. He has carried his apprehension so far as to say, that the Roman Catholics will

at last subvert your church, and then separate from England. The Catholic religion is the religion of Canada, and has long been so; and yet Canada has not separated from England, and yet have not the people there more than those powers which you say would produce a separation. From this, and from the other instance, I venture, in contradiction to the high authority of the member, to suppose that the civil and political liberty of dissenters, whether Presbyterian or Catholic, is compatible with the safety of your church and state, and your connection with Great Britain.

The right honourable member makes a further objection to this bill. He says the Roman Catholics would, from their numbers, renders elections tumultuary. I differ from those who think elections should not be popular; on the contrary, the expense, delay, and corruption attending elections, arises from the paucity of the electors, and would be, with a proper election law, prevented by their number. A small body of electors must ultimately become the monopoly of an individual, who will buy them; a great body cannot, because no individual can buy them. It should be property that elects; but property in the hands of the many, and not the few. However, the right honourable member has administered a cure to the objection arising from their numbers, by stating that of the Catholics 2,100,000 could not, on account of their poverty, be electors; it follows, from such a statement, that the Catholics to be admitted by this bill are less in population, as well as much less considerable in property, than the Protestants, and that the objection of the member is answered. From an objection thus answered by the member himself, the right honourable gentleman proceeds to another, and observes, that the Roman Catholics are not fit to exercise the elective franchise, from their present state of moral depravity. He grounds that belief on a paragraph in the committee's petition, which mentions that several of them have been induced, by the severity of the present exclusion, to commit perjury; but will the right honourable member, on such an evidence, going only to a particular instance in the case of some individuals, assume the moral depravity of the whole Catholic community, for the purpose of imposing on the whole of that body legal incapacities. Never could an individual, much less a vast body, in so summary a manner, be convicted of such an offence, to inflict such a punishment? But, if such is the moral depravity of the majority of your countrymen, why suffer them to be evidences? Why not disqualify them from giving their testimony in a court of justice, as from giving their vote on the hustings? Do you

think it safe to expose your lives and fortunes to be affected by their testimony as evidences, when you think your elections should not be affected by their votes, because they are not credible on oath? But it is plain that they do not deserve, nor you entertain such an opinion of them. I come to another objection of the right honourable gentleman,—

The times,—these, he says, are not times to give the Catholic the elective franchise; public credit has fallen, and he proposes to reject this bill. A war has taken place, and he proposes to exclude three-fourths of your people from the blessings of your constitution. Suppose a descent on this country by the French; do gentlemen imagine the Catholic will be more active in resisting them on account of their legal incapacities? The right honourable member has said; if the Catholics would avail themselves of the opportunity of the times by migrating: they are not safe objects of your confidence. I think they are; nor can I condemn any set of men who migrate in search of liberty abroad, instead of proscription at home; but, suppose they should not migrate, but remain; does the right honourable gentleman see no danger in the times, no danger lest good subjects should, under the operation of incapacities, and under the prevalence of the doctrines of the times, catch the poison, and, instead of continuing good monarchy men, become republicans? Do not gentlemen know, that the enemy combats you not only with its arms, but its doctrine? That the bitterness of the Catholic religion is spent, and the rage of republican principles is advancing, and that if you exclude your fellow-subjects from the rights of the British constitution, they may, perhaps, be tempted to look to the rights of men? In such times I find a new argument for Catholic freedom, under the monarchical constitution. The right honourable member finds, in such times, a new argument for their disabilities. The right honourable member has been pleased to conclude a very able, but with deference to that great ability, may I be permitted to say, an erroneous argument; he has concluded with one great principle, adduced to combat this bill. The House of Commons are, says the member, trustees, and cannot prejudice the elective rights of those who send them to Parliament; or, at least, cannot prejudice those rights without the consent of their constituents. I must here deny, that the right of the Protestant constituents is prejudiced by this bill; on the contrary, I hope, I have shown that those rights are strengthened by it; that, at present, the Protestant community does not, in any adequate or effectual manner, exercise the right of elections, that those rights have become the property of a

few great patrons, and are, in a great measure, lost to the community, Protestant as well as Catholic; and that the only way of restoring them to that community, is to give that community weight against the influence of the minister or the patron, by adding to its numbers a portion of its fellow-subjects.

But, waving the application, and admitting this principle of the right honourable member, which, properly understood, I do not, by any means, combat, "That the House of Commons are only trustees, and have no right to prejudice the elective franchises of their constituents," it follows, that the powers of Parliament, in governing and controlling the elective franchise, are much more limited than the right honourable gentleman in the first part of his speech, seemed to conceive. It follows, that Parliament has no absolute authority over their franchises. It follows, that the law of George II., adduced by the member, which took away the elective franchise from the Catholic; and still more, the two resolutions of the House of Commons, affecting to disfranchise them, without even the form of law; resolutions whose authority the right honourable member has also resorted to, were, according to his own principle, as now advanced, so many breaches of trust. We are not to understand, that the House of Commons was a trustee for the rights of its electors, provided they were Protestants. We are not to understand, that the House of Commons has no right to prejudice the elective franchise of its constituents, by extending them; but that it has a right to prejudice the elective franchise of those constituents, by a total and entire extinction. The principle is equally applicable to the Catholic as the Protestant elector; and as the rights of the Roman Catholic elector come precisely within the principle now advanced by the member, as they were, without consulting him, and by his trustee, in breach of that trust, extinguished on a former occasion; the question now before you is, by the right honourable member, reduced to a small compass; whether you will set aside that act of violence, and fulfil that trust by an act of restitution; that is, by restoring to the Catholic the elective franchise.

Such were the principal points in the speech of a gentleman, whose great abilities and great authority, even in error, cannot fail to make an impression. To the other honourable member*, who has repeatedly traduced His Majesty's subjects, and, among others, myself, I shall only say, that in most of

* Dr. Duigenan.

his assertions, he has wanted foundation. That the conduct of the Catholic since the Revolution, and the opinion expressed by the legislature thereupon, refutes him; that history, and the very history which he quotes, not far from the very page which he cites, refutes him; for, in Harris, his own author, whom he produced as his authority to say, that none of the Irish forces, after the capitulation of Limerick, joined King William, he will find that nineteen regiments of them went into the service of the English, and Harris gives the names. I must farther observe, that the charges which the member has made against the aggregate meeting of the city of Dublin, are as void of foundation as all his other attacks; that the aggregate was composed of a number of respectable citizens, who could stand a comparison with the member who abuses them, both in credit and condition. I will add, that I have reason to think they spoke the sense of the city, and I learn, that some of the most wealthy and respectable, who had before signed instructions against the grant of the franchise to the Catholics, now approve of that measure; and I will further say, in defence of all who have been libelled in this debate, that none has ever gone so far in dereliction of public principle, as to profess themselves advocates for an union. That crime their greatest enemy never attempted to attribute to them; and that crime, I hope, will ever continue confined to their greatest enemies. Sir, as to myself, who have been alluded to in this or other debates on this subject, I shall say, that where my fellow-citizens are the subject of attack, I do not decline to take my share of obloquy. Situated and connected as I am, with the fate and fame of my country, I must expect a personal attack, whenever she is made the subject, either of invective or oppression. I will humbly endeavour to shield her against both; I incline not to put an ill construction in this question, on the motives of any gentleman; I do not desire it; but they ought to do similar justice to mine.

The question was then put on Mr. Vandeleur's amendment; — Ayes 72, Noes 144; Majority 72. An amendment proposed by Mr. Warburton, to limit the franchise to five pound freeholders, was also negatived. Doctor Duigenan's amendment was likewise negatived, and the clause passed in its original form.

On the 1st of March the House went into a Committee on the bill; an amendment of Mr. Corry was proposed, "That Roman Catholic electors should perform the qualifications now required by Protestants, the oaths of abjuration and supremacy excepted:" this amendment was adopted. An amendment proposed by Mr. Grattan, "That they might be elected professors in physic, on the foundation of Sir Patrick Dunn's Hospital," was also agreed to.

On the 4th of March the House went again into the committee on the bill: an oath to be taken by the Roman Catholics was proposed by Dr. Duigenan; it was supported by Mr. Hobart, on the ground that it did not differ from the declarations of the Roman Catholics; after some discussion it was adopted.

Sir Hercules Langrishe moved an amendment regarding the bye-laws of corporations, so as to prevent their operating to the injury of the elective franchise; this was carried. Mr. Annesley moved, that the words "Commissioners of the revenue" be expunged from the prohibitory clause; this was also carried. Mr. Grattan objected to the clause enumerating the offices from which the Catholics were to be excluded. Mr. Maxwell proposed to exclude them from the place of keeper of records, register of deeds and his deputy, and the prothonotaries of the two courts, and accordingly made a motion to that effect, which was negatived. Mr. Claudius Beresford moved, that the words "Provost and Fellows of Trinity-college" be expunged, which was also negatived. Mr. Annesley moved, that the place of post-master be left open for the Catholics, which was likewise negatived. Major Doyle moved, that they be admitted as high sheriffs, which was also negatived. Mr. Grattan said, "That the clause excluding them from these and other offices created a barrier that could not stand; it would be in vain to attempt to keep out of the offices of state men who were admitted into the constitution."

Mr. Osborne moved, "That Catholics be admitted to the benefits of Protestant strangers in corporate towns, under the statute of Charles the Second," which was negatived. Sir Hercules Langrishe proposed, "That the clause introduced in the Committee by way of proviso, preventing Roman Catholics from voting at vestries, on questions relative to parish property, should be withdrawn." Mr. G. Ponsonby approved of this. It was opposed by Dr. Duigenan, and ultimately rejected. On the 6th, the bill, with these several amendments, was passed, ordered to be engrossed, and sent to the Lords; and finally was enacted the law of the land. This was the second æra, after 1782, of public justice and Protestant liberality; and the Roman Catholics were thus still further restored to a portion of their long-lost rights and liberties.

MILITIA BILL.

March 7. 1793.

THE order of the day for the second reading of the militia bill being called for, Mr. Forbes moved, "That it be postponed to the 19th of April;" he stated, that he did not object to the principle of the bill, but, viewing it relatively both as to England and Ireland, it was liable to objections; at present he could not discern

many shades of difference between a standing army and a militia; for instance, the cases of Lord Carmarthen and Lord Pembroke, who were dismissed from the government of their respective counties for their conduct in Parliament against administration. The Lord-lieutenant of the county, who appoints the officers, holds his situation at the will of the minister; as to Ireland, the measure ought to be accompanied with such bills as would afford content to the people. A bill that increased the military establishment of Ireland to 36,000 men, ought to proceed *pari passu* with a redress of grievances. The bill was supported by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Willsborough, Mr. J. O'Neill, Mr. Knox, Mr. Barrington, and General Cunningham...

Mr. GRATTAN said: A bill of sixty-eight pages, delivered at one o'clock this morning, purporting to give government a military force of I have heard sixteen thousand men in addition to the army, and with all the consequent expense thereupon, is offered to your consideration to-night, with a view to commit it to-morrow, and report it the next day. Sir, the greatest enemy of the bill could not take a more effectual method to damn it for ever; except, that the intemperate language, with which it is pressed, is more prejudicial even than this precipitation; for some gentlemen have urged the militia, as a defence against the people; they have traduced the people; they have misrepresented their loyalty and affection; they have confounded with levellers and defenders the mass of the people of Ireland. I entirely agree, that certain insurgents are, in part, the object of this measure; but I must suppose, as I make no doubt it is the intention of the noble mover, that the militia is proposed principally to defend us against the French. Were I to collect any thing from that clamour, which has been put forth this night in this House, I should fear that, by some, something more was expected; that a defence against foreign and domestic enemies was expected, and that as soon as this measure passed, the hopes of the reform of Parliament would vanish.

This country, as she shares in the adversity of Great Britain, ought to participate of the benefits of her trade and constitution. In point of a place bill and responsibility bill, Great Britain is guarded by such bills; and now, when we are voting loans, and voting lotteries, it becomes necessary that we should, in point of constitution, be put on the same footing as England. The subject of parliamentary reform, administration held out to the people as a measure they were willing to acquiesce in, and it has become necessary for administration to do something for the advantage of the

country, and to administer such constitutional redress as would effectually relieve the people; and I call upon His Majesty's minister in this House to give his support to a place bill, a pension bill, and a responsibility bill, as measures that will tend to assimilate this country to the British constitution, and to conciliate the affections of the people.

I entirely agree, therefore, with an honourable gentleman, that the militia should accompany the redress of grievances; and I am for postponing the consideration of the militia to that time, which ministers have fixed for discussing the internal reform of Parliament, the place bill, &c. and which will be the time when the more equal representation of the people will be considered. In this delay, I am not opposing a militia, I am defending a reform. I am of opinion, that the militia and the constitutional settlement should be considered together, and I observe those who press forward the former, are the old enemies to the latter, and, therefore, suspect their zeal and clamour; they both are manifested by those who do not love our measures, neither reform, nor any of them. I repeat it, I say the constitutional settlement and the militia should be considered together; on this ground I do not fear to stand with a few against the power of this assembly. Gentlemen have told you it will be too late to array the militia, if you postpone the bill till April. Why then did the minister postpone the place bill till that time? Why are these concessions which we are to expect postponed till that time? We were ready, and are now ready, to go into the business of the constitutional settlement; but the minister having postponed that subject, forces on us the difficulty of postponing the other; otherwise we shall give every thing before we secure any thing. Besides, who were the cause of the necessity of this postponement? These who did not bring on the militia bill for near two months, that is, till the assizes, from the difficulty, I suppose, of the subject, and now surely cannot think that we require not more than two days to deliberate upon it. But the ground on which I stand is this: let the constitutional settlement and the militia be considered together; and to those gentlemen who talk of the delay and difficulty of carrying the militia into execution, I will inform them, that the most easy method of arraying the militia, is to reconcile the people to it, by redressing their grievances. The reform of Parliament would facilitate a militia more, much more than our precipitation. I am, therefore, for postponing the consideration of the militia to the consideration of the constitutional settlement.

After a few words from Mr. R. Stewart (Lord Castlereagh), who doubted, whether, in addition to the large force already voted, a further augmentation was necessary, the question that the bill be committed next day was put, and carried without a division.

POLICE BILL.

June 24. 1793.

THE order of the day for going into a committee on the police bill being read, Dr. Duigenan opposed the bill; he stated that its object was the establishment of a democracy in the city, and that it divested the Crown of that wholesome control which it at present possessed therein; he particularly objected to that part of the bill, which enacted that the election of the magistrates should be in the lord mayor and aldermen, with the approbation of the common-council; the law which rendered the approbation of the Commons necessary, was a radical defect in the constitution of the city.

Mr. GRATTAN declined entering into the minutiæ of the bill at present; the proper time for that would be in the committee, till when he would wait to combat what the honourable gentleman had asserted, and he would pledge himself fully to refute him. The dominant idea in the honourable gentleman's calculations was, that the proposed plan would be more expensive than the existing establishment; and in order to give colour to the assertion, he had stated the annual expense of the police at 15,400*l.* and he had particularly said that this was the WHOLE of the expense. Now in the latter part of the assertion the honourable gentleman had fallen into very considerable error; for he would pledge himself to show, from papers on the table, that this was not the whole expense, and that 1900*l.* per annum, which is taken from the ordinary revenue for the purpose of paying the commissioners, was not included in this estimate [Dr. Duigenan agreed that this was not included.] This sum, which went to support the useless part of the institution, which went to sow the seeds of ministerial influence, added to the other estimate, would make the annual expense be little less than 18,000*l.* even last year; in former years it bordered on 20,000*l.* If then the proposed plan were even as expensive as the honourable gentleman has stated it, which it was not,

yet would it be cheaper than the present system. At any rate, the very material error the honourable gentleman had fallen into by the omission of so large a sum as 1900*l.* should teach the House to be doubtful of the accuracy of his statement in other instances, and induce them rather to go into committee on the bill. than suffer an enormous estimate of expense to defeat the principle of the bill. Indeed he should be greatly surprised if after what had been said on this subject, ministers could possibly oppose the committal. For his part he had little doubt that by proper limitations and restrictions of salary which might be proposed in the committee, the whole expense of 550 men on an average of the year round, might be confined to 11,000*l.* allowing 1*s.* per day to each private watchman. The other expenses, including salaries to the superintending magistrates, divisional justices, &c. would not amount to 3000*l.* more; thus the whole would be but 14,000*l.* per annum, which is 4000*l.* cheaper than the present odious and insufficient establishment.

The honourable gentleman had stated that the saving of the proposed plan was in the pay of the watchmen; the contrary was the truth; the difference between the bill and the present police law was this, that by the bill the expense is for the watchmen, not for the patronage; by the law the expense is incurred by the patronage, not by the watchmen. He would prove before the committee, if the bill were suffered to go before one, that the expense of the patronage equalled all the other expenses of the institution put together.

As to the honourable gentleman's assertion that the bill went to establish a democracy in the city, he laughed at it. Did the honourable gentleman remember that the superintending magistrates by this bill were chosen precisely in the same way in which the lord mayor and sheriffs of the city were chosen? Would the honourable gentleman say that the law under which those magistrates were chosen, established a democracy in the metropolis? Certainly he would not. Much as democracy was now reprobated, and much as it was now ridiculed as it existed in France, yet our respect for corporations and corporate rights should be preserved; or, if the honourable gentleman disliked them, his dislike should rather induce him to propose a repeal of the existing laws for electing lord mayor and sheriffs of the present constitution of the city, than to oppose the bill. In framing this bill he had thought it better to take the constitution of the city *as he* found it, than to resort to new ideas on that subject; *nor did* the constitution of the city appear to him so *faulty* in this

instance, as it did to the honourable gentleman. What! should it be said that a city is governed by democracy, if the executive power have not the government of it? What was a corporation? What were corporate rights but limitations against the executive power? Whenever the Crown interfered with a corporation, then a principle of the constitution was violated by the executive government. He would warn the honourable gentleman that democracy was more likely to be excited by the line of conduct he was pointing out, than by any another, namely, the interference of the Crown with the rights of corporations. It was that which would rouse up party in opposition to the minister, and would throw the state into a kind of popular fever, which was equally dangerous to the liberty of the people and power of the Crown. But the conduct of his Majesty's ministers was the best refutation of the charge; for they were too sagacious and too vigilant to have admitted the bill, and suffered its progress hitherto, if there were any principle in it that favoured too strongly of democracy.

He did not wish to bind down any gentleman to support the committal of the bill, because he had agreed to it in its former stages through the House; yet he must say, the right honourable gentleman had taught him to believe that he would not oppose the principle of the bill, as he had declared that he despised the patronage of the institution. He could not help lamenting that administration were still so ill advised as to defend the principle of the present system. It was impossible they could long do it; had they the authority of twenty houses of Parliament at their back, they would find themselves unable to support the institution in its present state; they were wrong in principle and practice. The silly argument that the bill created a democracy would not avail them; it was a shallow artifice suggested by the minister; it could not deceive the public, it could not deceive themselves. Though for the present a torpor had seized the minds of the citizens, and rendered them insensible of their injuries, yet they would speedily shake it off; they would again come forth, and show ministers that the principle and the practice of the law was indefensible; they would tell them, what every gentleman knew to be the fact, that the police was originally but a job for the crown, and now was maintained, only because the city seemed to acquiesce with a torpid indifference.

Gentlemen had denied that the institution was odious: but had those gentlemen examined the various reports which had been made on that subject by committees of that House, they would have known that if ever a city entertained a

deep-rooted and cordial hatred of any measure, if ever a city entertained an odium capable of being ascertained by numerical calculation, the city of Dublin entertained such an hatred for this institution. No measure, no expense, no enormity of administration had ever excited discontent so strong or so general as this abominable establishment. But an honourable gentleman, (Colonel Blaquiere,) had said as much in one word on the subject of police as he could say in twenty sentences; he had told the House that "he had seen the police magistrates at the head of the military."

This single circumstance spoke the institution. To render recurrence to military aid unnecessary, had been the professed object of the establishment of the police system, yet was military aid resorted to on every occasion. Hence appeared the inefficacy of the establishment, and the falsehood of its pretext. Would any gentleman say it was fair or reasonable that the people of Dublin should pay 18,000*l.* per annum, in order that the police magistrates may preserve the peace of the city, by means of the King's army? No man would be so hardy: Yet it was inevitable, he granted, that the police magistrate should resort to the military. The people so cordially and *imo in corde* abhorred the police, that it was impossible they could ever of themselves be efficacious; the fact was ascertained by the various reports before the House; but gentlemen had not read those reports; they were too voluminous to be read by men who knew how to vote without them.

As to the argument of an honourable gentleman (Mr. Ormsby), that the present bill retained all the unconstitutional parts of the police law, he would inform that gentleman that whatever strong parts of the police law were judged necessary for the preservation of the peace, those were copied, but with a difference which the honourable gentleman did not seem to attend to, namely, that, in the police law those powers were vested in the Crown, and thence became unconstitutional; by the bill they were vested in the magistrates of the city. As to that other argument (of Mr. Beresford) against this bill, drawn from the corporation being liable to factious influence, it went not merely against the bill but against the constitution of the city, and if it influenced the honourable gentlemen at all, should induce him to move for a repeal of that constitution; else the honourable gentleman would be guilty of the absurdity of asserting that the corporation might, without danger, be entrusted with the election of the superior officers, but that to entrust them with the appointment of the subordinate ones would be fatal.

The bill was opposed by Mr. Hobart, Mr. Beresford, Sir John Blaquiere, and Mr. Barrington; it was supported by Dr. A. Browne, Mr. Curran, and Mr. W. Ponsonby.

The House divided on the question, that the Speaker do leave the chair;—Ayes 30, Noes 83; Majority against the bill 53. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Grattan and Mr. Curran; for the Noes, Dr. Duigenan and Mr. Arthur Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington).

EAST INDIA TRADE.

MR. GRATTAN SUBMITS HIS RESOLUTIONS REGARDING THE IRISH TRADE.

July 3. 1793.

MR. GRATTAN said, before the House should resolve itself into a committee on the East India bill, he would state his ideas on the subject of East India commerce. It was more necessary to be explicit on the subject now, as the probability was that this would be the last opportunity to say any thing on commercial arrangements. He then entered into a train of reasoning to show the importance of the surrender which the bill made to Great Britain, and to prove that Ireland was not only capable of carrying on a trade to the East, but such a trade as must increase her wealth, and promote her manufacture.

The argument which, on a former occasion, had been advanced against this position was, that this country could not export any article of manufacture to the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, for that Great Britain herself could not export any. On that occasion an honourable friend of his stated that 50,000*l.* was at that moment exporting. He was answered that this was for the use of the British settlements only: but, on enquiry, he found that it was for the general India market. He would prove from authentic documents that the export trade existed; from the accounts of the India company it appeared that the exports of manufacture to India were, in the year 1786, 243,000*l.*; 1787, 290,000*l.*; 1788, 384,000*l.*; 1789, 356,000*l.*; 1790, 440,000*l.* And they continued increasing to the present year. It had been asserted that there was no market in China for British manufacture; the reverse was the case; as public documents prove the export to India and China last year amounted

to a million, exclusive of the private trade. This trade was an export trade.

I beg to observe, that last year, when gentlemen on the other side denied the fact of such an export, there appeared a pamphlet in London, written, I apprehend, with the approbation of ministers, and founded on extracts from the India house, setting forth the export in the year 1790 to China, of British goods and manufactures, to the amount of 600,000*l.* in that year; and the minister appeared to think the trade so valuable, that he sent out an ambassador to promote, regulate, and establish it; and I must add, that, in official correspondence touching the same, the trade to China has been particularly relied on as capable of producing great benefits to England. Having proved the actual export of goods and manufactures to the East, I have answered the argument that denied the possibility of so doing; and I have refuted the two assertions of the former year, first, that there was no Indian market for British manufacture; secondly, that there was no Chinese market for them. It remains to consider, whether such exports consist of produce or manufacture, which Ireland does actually or may be expected to furnish; those exports are woollens, steel, copper, tin, iron; and I will say, without apprehension of contradiction, that glass, hard-ware, all kinds of metals and naval stores; and I might add other more minute particulars, are articles which the East would take, and which Ireland could now, or may be well expected in the course of time to furnish; and, if any thing was wanting to refute the assertion that this country was not capable of making such an export, it is the opinion of the gentlemen who made the assertion, an opinion manifested in the offer of a vessel of eight hundred tons to export annually to the East the goods and manufactures of Ireland.

Am I to understand, that if the trade was unshackled, you could not export any article; but that the limitation of the commerce to eight hundred tons, and of the progress of the vessel to the three ports of Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta, creates a want of your manufactures, and in you a capacity of exporting them?

The next argument against the trade of Ireland was, that it was a pernicious import trade; nothing but import, and that import, loss and luxury, cottons, wools, sugar, raw silk, indigo, dying stuff, nitre, drugs, and spices of immense value, articles of oriental growth, some of them your general consumption, some of them the rudiments of your manufactures, the dearness of which in Ireland is a grievance. What was the case of cotton wool last year? Was it not extremely dear,

and more so, because the English resorted, I apprehend, to your markets, and bought it up here in considerable quantities? Would it have been no advantage to have had then a free importation of cotton from Bengal?, no advantage to have now a free importation of cotton from Guzarath, on the Malabar coast, where cotton is the cheapest — an importation free from the immense load of the East India Company's freightage? The quality of the cotton wool of India cannot be bad, because the manufacture made of that cotton is so excellent, that the English do not think they can meet it in their own markets, and therefore prohibit the wearing of foreign cotton. The quantity of East India cotton is infinite, and the price considerably less.

Suppose the Company carry on their trade better than they have done, and supply England abundantly with East India cotton wool; suppose the private traders, authorized by the present India bill, or licensed by the Board of Controul, should do this, and that then the Parliament of England lays a prohibition on the export of cotton; what an advantage this is to the cotton manufacture of England over Ireland, added to those which she already possessed over us! The case of sugar is stronger; the high price of that article is excessive; the price of East India sugar is beyond all comparison less than that of the West; it may have risen a little of late, because the planters in the East were not prepared for the demand; but it must appear of necessity cheaper than the West India sugar, if you compare the price of slaves in the West Indies with the price of labour in the East, which is, as I am informed, but a penny a day.

Here Mr. Grattan went into a statement of the difference in the price of East and West India sugar, and concluded, that East India sugar might be brought home at above thirty per cent. less than West India; and that by the monopoly of the Company, Ireland confined herself in sugar to one market, — the British plantations; whereas England had two if she chose it, Asia as well as the West Indies, the cheap market as well as the dear one.

The Irish duty on that article is regulated by the Parliament of England. Suppose she shall raise that duty still higher, and encourage the import from the East; she may thus destroy your sugar manufacture. You seem, by this bill, to put the dominion of your trade in this particular, out of your own hands. The next article is raw silk, another rudiment of manufacture; judge of the importance of that article, by resorting to the evidence that appeared before your manufacturers' committee, to which I refer you. As to tea,

I allow it is no primum of manufacture, but it is an article of general consumption, and, in other countries, of commerce; generally dearer by far at the sales of the Company, than in other parts of Europe.

I have an account of the sales of tea at Amsterdam, L'Orient, Lisbon, and Gottenberg, and the sales of tea in London, at or about the same time; and hence it will appear from the fact, the superior dearness of tea in London. It happens that the Company sometimes have resorted to the sales in Europe, in order to supply their consumers, and Ireland among others; if you add to this, the addition which the price must receive from the freight to Ireland, and other circumstances attending the circuitous trade, you will find, that for an article of which you consume 2,000,000 of pounds, you pay an immoderate price to the Company.

There are other articles, such as pepper, wherein you would not merely save by a trade to Asia, but have a profit, the calculation of which would surprise you. From this statement I conclude, in direct opposition to the assertion of the former session, the import from the East would not of necessity be a ruinous import, but might be a very beneficial one; beneficial to the merchant in particular, and the country in general. And, against both the assertions of the last sessions, that one which maintained you could have no export for your produce and manufactures, and that one which said you would be prejudiced by the import, I say you might have a probable export and profitable import.

I might support by authorities what I have proved by figures. Adam Smith observes, in direct contradiction to those who have depreciated a trade to the East, that it might not only be a profitable trade, but much more profitable than a trade to the West, and gives his reasons; Hindostan, China, Japan, and those regions being more civilized, rich, and populous, must be more advantageous sources of commerce than the American or West Indies.

I might add other authorities, and some official, which insist that the China trade in particular might be rendered a most valuable trade to Great Britain; that trade which gentlemen have insisted was the most pernicious; and if I were permitted to suggest my own ideas on the subject, I cannot believe that nations, innumerable in number, various in produce, abundant in growth, redundant in riches, and in most of the rudiments of your manufacture overflowing, would not in any period of time open a source of profit to your growing industry, intelligence, and speculation.

A third objection to your trade to the East was, the distraction of your capital, as if you did not now expend near half a million of your capital annually on Eastern produce; the tea is paid for in ready money; the English duty is paid in advance, and only drawn back on certificates; the Company take no articles of Irish produce, growth, or manufacture; so it is a circuitous trade of import for money. If you exported one yard of woollen to the East, it would be for so much a diminution of this distraction of capital; if one man came from England with his capital to trade to the East, it would for so much be a saving of Irish capital; and that money would come we know; it is not a matter of expectation but certainty. If you imported Eastern goods cheaper than you do at present, it would be for so much a saving of Irish capital.

I have shown this Company to be the dearest merchant with whom you can deal: permit me here to observe, that the freightage of this Company has been 10*l.* a ton dearer than they now admit to be necessary, and more than 10*l.* a ton dearer, (near, perhaps, one-half dearer,) than the freightage of the private merchant; but you will better understand how dear the East India articles, brought from the Company, and sent to Ireland, must be, when you know that the freightage, the charges, the custom, and the 6 per cent. charges on merchandize, amounted all together to near 90 per cent. of the original price of the goods purchased by the Company, and sent to Europe. From hence two conclusions follow: the profitable nature of the trade, and the improvident manner in which it is carried on by the Company, and I believe it may be truly said, that the East India Company has been the instrument of remitting revenue, but not of extending the commerce of the East. Whatever, then, would be saved in the price of the article here, is for so much a diminution of the distraction of capital; and that much would be saved, appears from the statement I have shown of the charge of this Company on their commerce. The objection, then, of the distraction of capital; goes for the direct and open trade to Asia; in order to invite foreign capital and save your own; in order to export your produce, and recover so much of your capital; in order to pay so much less for the articles you now consume; and for so much diminish this distraction of capital; and in order to import abundantly the rudiments of manufactures, and repay yourself manyfold, perhaps for this supposed distraction of capital; it is a mistake to say, that a trade of import for bullion is always a bad trade; it may be an excellent one; it is often the case of the carrying trade, it is the case of the trade of

Holland, and it is often the case of these trades, where foreign produce is manufactured at home, and afterwards exported, perhaps at tenfold advantage; nor is it a fact, that the trade to the East would be an import for bullion. It was said the trade of England to China was such: I have shown the contrary; I have the account; I have a return of the exports of goods and bullion to China, for the latter four years, and instead of bullion being the whole of the export, it was not one-half; but it is a mistake to suppose that the export of bullion is always a loss. Bullion must be considered as so much labour sold for profit, which is exactly the case of the export of bullion to China. I have an account of the sale for four years; in the last year it only amounted to 600,000*l.*, and it appears, that on the sale of what cost about two million and an half, there was a profit of about half a million. I may therefore, conclude this head, by observing, that the objection, founded on an alledged distribution of capital, relies on arguments that have no existence either in the facts of the existing trades, or in the general principles of commerce.

It has been objected that you would trade no where but to China: that is another mistake. I will tell one place where you could trade to,—the East Indies, to the British settlements in the East Indies; you are almost the only nation in Europe that has no ships in these settlements: the nations of Europe and America trade there at alien duties; which duties are small compared to the charge for the rest of the Company, and are much more than drawn back by the difference; the want of information, in this particular, has prevented your merchant from adventuring on an East India trade, as the want of information, that your ports were free and open with respect to the East, prevented foreign or British merchants from resorting to you; they thought your ports were shut, and you did not know the British East India ports were open.

It has been said, you cannot trade without settlements and without exclusive companies. I answer that argument by your own; that all nations that have had settlements there, and exclusive companies, have suffered this trade, save only the British company, which company is converted from the business of advancing trade to that of advancing empire, and furnishes another argument against exclusive companies for the purpose of commerce, and in favour of Adam Smith, who attributed the ill success of Europe, in her trade to the East, that she has traded by exclusive companies; and I have shown you that a company *like* the British, with a territory fertile in the extreme, containing

20,000,000, and only importing into Great Britain goods whose original cost does not exceed a million, must have sacrificed commerce to empire.

It has been objected that a poor country like Ireland should resort rather to the markets of Europe, which are dear, than to go so far as the East for produce, though that produce should be cheap. It is true, provided you are so poor, and consume very little of those products; but consuming near half a million, of her produce, and manufacturing goods, whereof a produce similar to her's is the primum, the observation which Adam Smith applies to the Swede and the Dane, who are poor and consume but little East India produce, is totally inapplicable to Ireland. She consumes much; she wants the raw articles for manufacture, and she is certain to acquire a new capital from other countries to carry on this new commerce. Besides, if Adam Smith's observation did apply, it goes not against a trade to the East by an exclusive company; it goes against forcing the poverty of a poor country like Sweden, or limiting the speculation of a rich country like Holland, by an exclusive company; it goes, at the utmost, supposing you poor, as Sweden and Denmark, against establishing an exclusive company in England against yourselves.

That this country would be able to carry on this trade has been shown; but it is material to tell you, that capital is now ready to come from England to carry it on. But, it is said, this trade might be prejudicial to the nation, though it might be beneficial to the merchant; that will appear an error, when you recollect that the Company are in your market already; that it is not intended to prohibit them; and that the Irish private merchant can only get into the market, by underselling the English company in Ireland, which will be beneficial to the country, not prejudicial; his profits as a merchant, therefore, arise from your savings as a nation.

I have gone through all the principle arguments that were offered to this House against the trade of Ireland to the East; and, I think, I have shown what I first declared, tha they have been disproved by facts, as appear from the returns of accounts passed by some of those, by whom these arguments were principally advanced.

A new question seems to arise from a bill now before the House, and purporting to be a bill regulating our trade to the East Indies; of that bill I will say this, it is a surrender of the trade; a surrender, a sacrifice! It cuts you off from China, and from every part of the East, except the ports of Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta: it confines you to one ship belonging

to the Company, and limits your exports in that ship to 800 tons, and it prohibits any direct import whatsoever from the East; it therefore presents this question to the House: Will you, inasmuch as Great Britain has now determined to make an exclusive company to the East an essential part and principal of her empire; will you, as an independent Parliament, exercise your authority so as to frustrate totally, or if not, greatly annoy that Company, and annul or disappoint a British act of Parliament? or will you, for imperial necessity, sacrifice Asiatic commerce? It is a hard question. I am ready to answer: I say, *yes*; provided the surrender of trade with Asia is compensated by an equal intercourse and trade with England. We give up a great portion of foreign, we ask a free participation of domestic trade. As far as relates to plantations, the trade is rendered equal by the late construction of the act of navigation; but, as far as relates to home produce and manufacture, the trade is essentially unequal. I will consider it; I will leave the bill, and turn from exclusion in India, to prohibition in England; from an East India bill, by which you have excluded yourselves from the East, to a system of prohibitory duties, by which England has excluded you from Great Britain.

The existing system of trade between Great Britain and Ireland in the articles of home-growth produce and manufacture is the old one, with but few changes. And that old one was a system of injustice. England takes from you your primum of manufacture, and excludes the manufacture itself; England keeps at home the primum of her manufacture, and sends her manufacture to you; she keeps her wool at home, and sends you her drapery, and sometimes sends your own wool, manufactured into cloth. You import all her manufactures, and she refuses to take yours, linen excepted; and the linen excepted, only of one sort.

As far as relates to the home-produce or manufacture; there are two great principles of commercial regulation; one, the open market trade; the other, monopoly: you have adopted neither. You have not the open market, because you exclude the manufactures of other countries to favour England. You have not the monopoly, because you admit the manufactures of England to the exclusion of those of other countries, and every one of your own.

You have taken a third course; you have set up protecting duties, but they are protecting duties for another country, for England, against other nations, and eventually against yourself; whilst she, on the other hand, sets up protecting duties

for herself, and herself only, against you, as well as against the rest of the world.

This is a system of provinciality, of inferiority, of injustice, palpable injustice; this was the system so much complained of at the time of the propositions, and to remove which, some gentlemen were willing to surrender their constitution. It was then said, this country would never flourish so long as Great Britain set up the barrier of English prohibitions against Irish trade.

I own I did not think the injury you suffered from such, to be so great as should induce you to cripple your constitution; but I did, and do, think it considerable. It is impossible that this country (so was it then urged,) in contiguity to a great island such as England, of great wealth and consumption, should not, in progress of time, export many various articles of manufacture injuring Great Britain. Not in the least; for it is an error in commerce to suppose that what one nation gains the other loses: they both gain; they fructify on one another's industry; they augment mutually their productive labour, and grow and generate on each other's prosperity.

This advantage is denied to Ireland, though allowed to France. Since the French treaty this denial becomes an insult as well as an injury. France receives the manufactures of Ireland; Ireland receives the manufactures of England; England receives the manufactures of France, and excludes those of Ireland.

Thus is your natural enemy, France, preferred by England; and thus does England suffer that natural enemy to favour you more than she, Great Britain, does Ireland!!

This insult and this injury are aggravated by the bill before you, establishing your exclusion from the East, and adding it to her prohibition; for now your commercial situation is a surrender of foreign trade for a home trade, which is unequal and unjust. You give up for the British empire a trade to the East; and she excludes you from a trade in manufactures with herself. Such a situation is too unequal to last. This day I think you put a period to it. You this day make your claim to the home trade irresistible; such an exertion for the empire is to you irresistible pretensions.

I speak not of any right of Ireland to send her manufactures to England, except the right of justice, of gratitude, mutuality, and equality; a right founded in your surrender of a foreign trade, with every due regard for England. Let me add, that whatever concessions on this head you intend to make, they may derive a momentary sanction from law, but they must

look for permanency to justice; unless they are accompanied with a compensation such as I have stated; unless they are not accompanied with a restriction such as I have stated; unless the opening of the home trade follows the surrender of the foreign one, they cannot last.

In the progress of this bill, gentlemen have spoken of equality; they have said in the introduction, "it is not the regulation, but the principle of the regulation to which you are to advert." And what is that principle? They themselves have expressed it: "equality." Where are we to look for this equality? not in the surrender of the East India trade to England; no, but an equal, a reciprocal, a mutual trade with England on such duties as exist in that country, where the duties are the lowest, that is, the Irish duty; — an equal trade, I say, to compensate for that unequal, and, if uncompensated, unjust, and unparalleled surrender. Here is their own principle violated indeed in their East India bill, but to be restored by their home trade.

They cannot say that the East India bill puts the Irish on equal terms with the English: the man in Yorkshire receives the benefit of 1,000,000*l.*, annually paid by that Company to the English exchequer in tribute or taxes: do you receive any part of that, or any diminution of your taxes on account of that subsidy? does Indian contribution diminish Irish taxation? The ex-chartered Englishman, he receives benefit from the annual influence of capital into England, calculated, as I have seen, at many millions: do you receive benefit from any part of that capital? 80,000*l.* tonnage belonging to the Company; does not every part of England — does any part of Ireland receive benefit from that addition? In no particular which is essential are you equal under this bill; it remains to make you so under some other settlement; and what settlement remains but the abatement of a barrier established in England against the manufactures of Ireland? What taxes do the East India Company pay in Ireland? what tribute is paid to the Irish treasury for the exclusion? what millions are annually added to the circulating capital of this country? what direct import of the produce and treasures of Asia? none; none. But to compensate the inequality arising from a surrender of the possibility of these things, and to restore their own principle of equality, it is incumbent on those gentlemen to procure a mutual and equal intercourse in the home trade.

I have heard the word amity used in the progress of the bill. I adopt the sentiment and the expression; but what foundation of amity so good or lasting as that other principle which the same gentlemen have advanced? that equality,

commercial equality, which is now only to be looked for in the home trade of Great Britain and Ireland? And gentlemen may take my word for it, that a monopoly of the trade of Asia, and protecting duties against the trade of Ireland, is not that equality which can be the foundation of that amity. In vain shall we set expressions, however plausible; you must by acts, I mean by trade, equal trade at home, compensate for unequal trade abroad, and fulfil, in your own islands at least, your principle of equality to perpetuate and secure your other principle of amity.

Gentlemen have said, this is your great and only opportunity. By this great and only opportunity, they mean the East India bill, which contains the surrender of the East India trade. It is a great opportunity, and the only one: but an opportunity to do what? To open the market of England to Ireland, by giving the exclusive market of the East to England; the opportunity of showing Great Britain your affection to the empire, and of advancing, promoting, and securing an equal trade; that commercial harmony and domestic intercourse, and hence the general and particular interest, may be happily united, and a good and wholesome use made of the East India monopoly.

Gentlemen speak of settlement: here is an opportunity of settlement; and by settlement, I mean the reduction of duties in England on the admission of Irish manufacture, the intercourse in the raw produce; this will be a commercial settlement.

The East India question being settled by surrender, and the question of home trade being settled by equality, on this principle I shall move two resolutions; one respecting the manufactures; the other respecting the raw produce of these kingdoms. I move them not to clog this bill, but to declare a sentiment; I move them as a declaration of our inducements to vote for the East India bill; I move them as the final, unalterable opinion of the House, and a record of the just expectations of the country which I do now prefer as loudly and as fully as any other claim which the justice of England, the interest, and now the grants of Ireland, render irresistible.

I shall vote for the East India bill, which surrenders your East India trade to England for twenty years. I shall do it, because she finds it necessary to her commercial empire, and because it leads to another necessity equally imperious, the necessity of making in the home trade a compensation to your commercial interest; and thus you will have settled your commercial jealousies by an oblivion of the Eastern trade, and by amity with England.

Resolved, That in order to promote commercial equality, it is necessary that the manufactures of Ireland should be admitted into Great Britain on the same terms on which similar manufactures of Great Britain are now admitted into Ireland.

That the raw produce should be permitted to be exported from Great Britain into Ireland, on the same terms on which similar produce is permitted to be imported from Ireland into Great Britain.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied to Mr. Grattan. He contended, that, by the bill, Ireland was enabled to profit by the trade with India as much as the ex-chartered subjects of Great Britain; and the best way was first to begin under the auspices of Great Britain; that the circuitous return from Asia, through the port of London, was an inconvenience more than compensated by the low price of freightage: he concluded by moving the order of the day. Mr. Grattan's motion was opposed by Dr. Duigenan, Mr. Burton Conyngham, and Mr. Hobart. It was supported by Mr. Duquery, Mr. Vandeleur, and Mr. Forbes, who entered at great length into the merits of the question; an exclusive charter, he maintained, was injurious to trade, and a free intercourse would be more beneficial to Great Britain; in support of this was Mr. Dundas's letter to the court of proprietors, stating, "That, in his opinion, the grant of an exclusive commerce to India is not very material, either to the interests of the company or the public." By opening a trade with China, Ireland would derive great advantages; she is at present obliged to purchase tea from the Company in London, who do not take her manufactures; whereas, by a direct intercourse with China, she would find a market for them in that quarter of the globe; the bill was therefore objectionable, inasmuch as it allowed an export, but no import in return; if it therefore established what it professed to do—a perfect commercial equality, it should confer privileges as well as impose restrictions. The motion of Mr. Grattan, he thought, should be adopted. Mr. Grattan, however, agreed to withdraw it, on condition that it would be brought forward again in the course of the session.

PLACE BILL.

MR. FORBES MOVES THE BILL TO EXCLUDE PLACEMEN FROM SITTING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

July 16. 1793.

ON the 19th of February, Mr. Forbes had obtained leave to bring in a bill "to secure the freedom and independence of the House of Commons, by excluding therefrom persons holding

offices under the Crown, pensions during terms of years, or during pleasure." It was presented, and read a first time, and on the 7th of March it was read a second time, and moved to be committed.

Mr. Forbes, on that occasion said, that officers of the army and navy, were specially exempted from exclusion; the household of the Lord-lieutenant were excluded, and properly excluded, from seats in that House; but it was competent for all the principal officers of the state to sit in the House, subject to re-election on the acceptance of office. This was a safe and salutary parliamentary reform; for eight years he had laboured in the pursuit of this object, and the arrival of the bill to a committee, was to him a matter of great satisfaction.

Mr. Hobart supported the principle of the bill, as did Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Dunn, and Mr. Ponsonby. It was opposed by Sir Boyle Roche, Mr. Denis Browne, Mr. Barrington, and Mr. Beresford.

Mr. GRATTAN said: it is now time to consider the commercial and constitutional state of your country: in point of commerce we are unequal; the navigation act construed, so as to admit one country, and exclude the other; our Eastern trade, by our own law, checked and discouraged; in short, our trade is neither equal nor reciprocal, in reference to Great Britain; while we are incurring more, perhaps, than our proportion of expence in a war declared against England. Our constitution is also defective; we have not the blessings of the British constitution; we have not a pension bill, nor a place bill, nor any responsibility in the ministers of the crown. Our pension list is indefinite and disgraceful; the number of placemen sitting in Parliament, so numerous as to bear down all chance of weight, which the people ought to have in their own house of Parliament. As to responsibility, you have no such thing; the servants of the crown in Ireland are not placed on the principles of the British constitution; nor has your constitution herein any similitude with that of Great Britain. If, then, gentlemen mean to give this country the blessings of the British constitution, which we are entitled to by our services and our exertions, let them accede to these measures. I do not presume to say, that I know any thing of the sentiments of the British cabinet, but I am convinced, that a resistance to such concession will not proceed from them. The speech from the throne is a proof that the ministers of England are better disposed than those of Ireland to unite all ranks of men in the support of the government, by taking into consideration the condition of the subject. There are two other measures which I

persist to press, but I have not mentioned; a bill to disqualify the officers of the revenue from voting for members of Parliament; and a bill for the repeal of the police act. I think them both of consequence, and the latter indispensable. As to reform, I understand leave will be asked on Saturday to bring in a bill for a more equal representation of the people. This should be added to those concessions which we deem necessary to unite all men in cordial and active support of the British constitution. In this particular we are differently circumstanced from the English; for the people of Ireland are not represented here as well and as fully as the people of England are in the Parliament of Great Britain.

Having considered what this country wants, I will remind you of what she has given, — a great militry force, a great supply, and bills of extraordinary and unexampled power entrusted to His Majesty's ministers; and perhaps she is now on the point of granting additional force and aids. I, therefore, take this opportunity to put in a claim, on the part of the people, for their redress and satisfaction. I implore, I demand those measures of His Majesty's ministers; I desire that they may be substantially acceded to; and however ministers may think they are strong from the grants we have made, let me tell them, their great strength can only be given by themselves, that is, by a timely concurrence in such a system as can unite and satisfy.

It was carried that the bill should be committed, and that the House should resolve itself into a committee on the 20th of April. The House, however, adjourned over that day, and on the 10th of June, the question, that the bill be committed, was lost on a division. On the 16th of July, Mr. Forbes moved, that the committee be empowered to receive a clause, to disqualify persons employed in the management of the revenue, from sitting or voting in Parliament. It was opposed by the ministerial party, who defended the necessity of the influence of the Crown, and denied it to be a principle of the constitution, that a person should be excluded from Parliament because he held an office under government.

On this occasion, Mr. Grattan said: Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree that it should ever be laid down, as an abstract principle of the constitution, that the Crown should possess a certain degree of influence in this House; but I know, that though the theory of the constitution rejects such influence, the practice is otherwise; and it is the great secret of government, and the great duty of Parliament, to avoid and

prevent the abuse of this influence; otherwise it would grow to such a size, as to crush and overwhelm Parliament. As, therefore, it is the duty of Parliament to resist and controul the growth of this influence, so also it is the duty of ministers, when it becomes offensive to Parliament and the people, to submit to have it checked and limited: for, if you do not allow this latitude to ministers, without incurring the charge of inconsistency, they never can accede to any question which they have once opposed. Upon this principle, I do not see any inconsistency in their supporting a place bill now, though they opposed it in the year 1790; besides, since that time, the quantity of influence has very much increased; not only by individual new appointments, but by the establishment of a treasury-board; an establishment which the present bill, in a great measure, corrects; and, upon the whole, I think that opposition should rather return administration thanks for conceding this measure, than charge them with inconsistency, because they had formerly opposed it.

In excluding from this House the officers pointed out by the bill, it is not because they are unworthy that they are excluded, but because their business lies in other places; because, if they attend faithfully to their other duties, they cannot discharge their duty to their constituents; and, because we have the experience derived from the British act, that, in England, the measure has been attended with most salutary effects.

It has been proved, that you cannot govern this country by patronage; when you do not want the support arising from influence, you will have it; but you will not have it when you do want it: therefore, the system of my honourable friend, places government on a broader foundation — the favour of the nation, the affection of the people, which the merits of a good government will never fail to excite.

As to the question of a landed qualification, I shall not press any opinion upon the House. I think it was right to put it into the bill; for, abstractedly, it is certainly right, though, practically, it has its inconveniences; for if it had been strictly carried into effect, it is certain it would have excluded from the British Parliament some of the greatest statesmen that ever served their country: it would have excluded Lord Somers, Lord Chatham, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and many others. The theory is one way, the practice another; it would exclude a great many most excellent lawyers. I love to have able lawyers near me in Parliament. We have to

record but one disgraceful instance of their being excluded. Lord Coke calls the Parliament *Parliamentum indoctum*, and it is what we should not wish to see repeated.

I am not very fond of speaking of myself; I will, however, say, that, though the public have been pleased to give me a qualification, yet I must not forget, that, when I laboured most for the service of my country, I was, according to the provisions of this bill, not qualified to sit in this House.

The clause was negatived without a division. The bill then went through its several stages. It was much altered from its original form, and ultimately passed both Houses, and received the royal assent; and the influence of the Crown, in the House of Commons, was considerably lessened.

CONVENTION BILL.

July 17. 1793.

ON the 8th of June, the Lord Chancellor (Clare) moved in the Lords, for leave to bring in a bill, to prevent the election or appointment of conventions, or other unlawful assemblies, under pretence of preparing or presenting public petitions, or other addresses to His Majesty, or the Parliament. It passed through the House very speedily; only three Lords, Leinster, Charlemont, and Arran, voted against it. On the 13th, a message was sent to the Lower House, stating, that the bill had been passed; it was accordingly received, and read a first time, and on this day (17th) the order for the second reading being called for,

Mr. GRATTAN said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the principle of this bill and its clauses. The bill does not go to accomplish the end which was proposed; but goes to raise those jealousies which were intended to be removed. I oppose this bill, Sir, with peculiar concern, coming as it does from that august assembly which I highly revere. With peculiar concern I oppose it at this time, when a treasonable idea has gone abroad, levelling nobility with the dust. But, while I possess my respect for the persons, and my attachment to the institution of that august body, I cannot help withholding my assent from this bill. The preamble sets forth as law that which I deny to be law; it states that assemblies of delegates, purporting to represent the people for certain purposes of petitioning, &c. are

unlawful assemblies; this I deny to be law. I call upon the law-officers of the crown to prove it. I call on the lawyers to say, whether the mere appointment of delegates or representatives, for the purpose of petitioning the King or Parliament, is alone sufficient to make an unlawful assembly. I call for their authorities; where are their statutes, their adjudications, their opinions? There are none; they know there are none. The law never said that the mere appointment of a representative for a legal purpose, was an illegal act, or that the preparing a petition to the King or Parliament for the redress of a grievance, was an illegal purpose. I will examine their authorities. "An unlawful assembly," says Lord Coke, "is where three or more assemble in a body to commit a riot, and do not do it." "An unlawful assembly," says Blackstone, "is where three or more assemble to do an unlawful act, or to pull down inclosures, and part without doing it." "An unlawful assembly," says Hawkins, "is not only an assembling to do an act, which, if done, would make the assembly riot, but it is the meeting in great numbers, with such circumstances of terror as cannot but endanger the public peace, as where great numbers, complaining of a common grievance, meet armed in a warlike manner, to consider of the means of recovering their interests." Does a deputation, not armed in a warlike manner, nor in any manner, and appointed to do a legal act, come under all or any of these definitions? Does (I recite the substance of the bill) the appointment of any assembly to represent any description, or number of the people, for the purpose of preparing or presenting petitions relative to a public concernment, come under any one of these definitions? No lawyer can say so; because no lawyer could say so without forfeiting his character as a lawyer.

I will not only say that this preamble is not law, but that it is a bitter reflection upon the most illustrious periods in the histories of both countries — the deputation at Dungannon, which first resolved those principles of liberty which the Parliament afterwards enacted by statutes, to which Ireland owes her present political existence. If by this bill it is declared that the Dungannon meeting was an unlawful one, what might the Parliament of England say? Might not a bill pass there, reciting, that "whereas the liberties of the Irish nation are founded upon certain resolutions of a convention at Dungannon, afterwards enacted by Parliament; and whereas the Irish Parliament has since declared that convention to have been an unlawful assembly, and, of course, that its proceedings were unlawful, be it enacted, that the statute of the 6th Geo. I. shall stand revived"? would not the English Parliament

have fair ground for doing so, when Ireland deprecates her own title to liberty.

The preamble is farther conceived in a manner which I must always condemn. It is a vile trick in legislation to assume principles as settled law, and enact them into force to cheat the people, by making new laws, while you seem only to affirm the old; it is a practice which evidently tends to reconcile the people to the imposition of a new constitution, while the pretence is confirming the ancient system. What will be the law if this bill passes? In every case where the voice of the people may be hereafter necessary; in cases which may happen, (however unwillingly we may suppose it,) that voice will be checked and stifled by this bill. Should an attempt be made to garble the Parliament, to pass a perpetual mutiny bill, (a measure which you yourselves voted to be ground for popular discontent and jealousy,) or an attempt to transfer the power and the allegiance of this country by a union, and subjugate her to Great Britain; or, we may even suppose a case similar to that of James II., however improbable, and many events which the decorum of the constitution will not suppose, and has not provided for; the cases of dereliction or treachery in any of the legislative branches; or if attempts were made to grant the supplies for life, or to surrender the national religion without any security but the sovereign's honour, as was the case in James II.'s time: in all or any of these cases, the people have not hitherto indeed been authorized, but they have not been prohibited from exerting themselves to save their country; but by this act they will be for ever prohibited. Thus it is directly adverse to the genius of the constitution, and goes to destroy its resuscitative power, by incapacitating the people from acting in important cases by delegation; the only way, when, in such emergencies, they can act with constitutional energy.

What was the committee of commerce in this country, but such an assembly as is here pronounced illegal? What the delegates from the different counties in England, in 1780, to promote a reduction of the expenses of the state? What the conventions in England, in 1782, for the purpose of the reform of parliament? What the delegates for the procuring the repeal of the test act? What the Presbyterian synod? What the delegates of the Quakers? What the convention in England, for the purpose of restoring Charles II.? What the convention in Ireland, for bringing about the revolution, in 1782? What the convention styled a northern association and general council, to direct the operation of associated bodies, united for the purpose of religion and liberty? But I cannot omit

one convention to which the present family owes its crown, and which, if this bill is law, was an act of rebellion: I mean that glorious and immortal assembly purporting to represent the people of England, that placed the crown on the head of William and Mary. This assembly comes under every clause in this bill, descriptive of illegal assembly. Had such a bill as this been the law of England, and been executed, Lord Somers and the leaders in the revolution must have been apprehended. I have read much of the proceedings of the Catholics at the time of the revolution, but I never before read their justification in the shape of an act of Parliament; for if this declaratory bill be law, then the convention of 1688 was against law, and all its proceedings of course, and, amongst others, the settlement of the crown, illegal, and the resistance of the Catholics to that settlement warrantable by law. Who would have thought that the Catholics would have found, in the defamer of their loyalty, an apologist for their rebellion? Who would have thought to have found in a bill professing to be a strong measure in favour of power, the seed of a principle which impeaches the succession of the Crown, in the present illustrious family; but so interwoven, fortunately, is the title of the King with the liberties of the people, that no man can be the enemy of the one without at the same time suggesting a question against the other. Such melancholy and gross ignorance does this act betray of the history of both countries, and such a total and shocking disregard to every trace of sound constitutional principle, without which no man can be a safe lawyer, or a good citizen. Blackstone speaks of this law of redress; the law of redress ascertained as at the revolution, and the law of redress unascertained, as in those cases where the governing powers betray their trust, and conspire against the common weal, such as the modesty of the law will not suppose, and therefore against which it does not provide a remedy, but leaves the redress open to the exigency; and it is this which Lord Bolinbroke means, when he says the constitution of Great Britain cannot be destroyed, even by Parliament. Kings, like James II., may abdicate; Parliaments, like his Parliament, may betray their trust; but the resources of this constitution are such, that the people cannot be enslaved, until they themselves are universally corrupt. How then are they to redress themselves when they are betrayed by Parliament? how, in such a case — how? but by resorting to what this bill makes a misdemeanor, the appointment or delegation of some body or bodies, who may confer and communicate. This bill, I therefore submit, is not only, as a declaration of law, false and ignorant, but highly criminal and mischievous, as a

provision against those popular resources which Ireland found necessary once, and England found necessary also, and without which neither had been free, — resources which should neither be prohibited nor encouraged. Let me suppose that the persons who gave their early and almost infant voice against a motion to declare the rights of the Irish Parliament, had succeeded so far as to prevent the House in the end from adopting that measure; let me suppose that the same persons who proposed to give back the substance of those rights, on the question of the memorable propositions, attended as that question was with a senseless petulance of speech, against the character as well as the pretensions of Ireland; let me suppose that they, at that time, had prevailed; let me suppose that those who denied the substance of that declaration of right on the question of the regency, and maintained that a British convention could make a law for the people of Ireland, and that this country was governed by the great seal of England; let me suppose that they had been able, at that time, to impose their empty quibble as law, and their shameless assertion as constitution; let me suppose that he who had declared in this House, that the Irish parliament had been once bought for half a million, and that it might be made necessary to buy it again for the same, or a greater sum; let me suppose that he had been able to establish the profligacy of this principle, the violence of such measures, or the corruption of such practices, as permanent maxims of government; let me suppose, that those who, by the precipitation of their temper inflamed, misled, and finally exposed the Protestant interest, as they have since endeavoured to alienate the Catholic interest by the petulance of their language; let me suppose that they had prevailed in any, and still more in all their desperate enterprises against their country; in such a case, might not a convention have been necessary? It is true, the good sense of some of His Majesty's ministers has checked the arbitrary genius that inspired such sentiments, governed his temper, and renounced his bigotry, and, by taking reconciling steps, has rendered a convention at present unnecessary, improper, and improbable. But in a country where such practices have been resorted to, and such avowal of such profligacy publicly made, shall we say that in no time to come there shall ever be a convention? Such a practice, and such an unabashed avowal of such a practice, is the subversion of all government, of English government in Ireland, or of any government, because it is the subversion of those principles moral and religious, without which there can be no government. The minister, therefore, who proclaimed that it was

the custom of the British government to buy the Irish Parliament with half millions, proclaimed by necessary deduction the necessity of an Irish convention. Happily, I say, that principle is changed, and a convention unnecessary and unwarranted; but in a country where such a thing could even have been publicly advanced by administration, will you pass an act against any convention at any time to come, or any representation of any description of the people for any specific public purpose?

Sir, this bill I pronounce to be an anti-whig and anti-constitutional measure, and the boldest step that ever yet was made to introduce a military government. Sir, if this bill had been the law of the land, four great events could never have taken place; the independency of the Irish Parliament; the emancipation of the Irish Catholics; the revolution in Great Britain; and the great event that flowed from it, the succession of the Hanoverian family. The enacting part is a bill of popular incapacities instead of a constitution of popular resources; the enacting part is a proviso against future redress in cases of emergency, as the declaratory part is a declaration against the legality of past redress. In this latter light it must be considered as a libel on the revolution; on your own meeting at Dungannon; on all the proceedings of your volunteers, and on the Catholic convention.

Do gentlemen remember the volunteers; they always acted by deputation; they had deputed some of their body even to the throne, and on no less a matter of public concernment, than the independence of the country. And how were they received? Were they sent to prison as emissaries of an unlawful assembly? No; they were most graciously received by the King, and the whole administration of England. Besides this, thanks to these very men are on the journals of the House. Would this House have thanked men, who at that moment constituted an unlawful assembly? Many of the members of this House have been deputies from these volunteers. If they vote for this bill, they must declare themselves to have been members of an illegal and indictable assembly. Where is the use of stigmatizing the volunteers? Never was there an armed body, that did so much good with so little mischief. They have strong claims on the gratitude and veneration of their countrymen. If, in the cause of liberty, they sometimes went too far; if the ardour of youth could not at all times command the precaution of old age, draw a veil over the infirmity, remember the essential service; respect the soldier's memory, and do not now, when he is dead, assemble round his grave with the

little enemy of his cause and his fame, to write on his tomb this dirty indictment. Some of the gentlemen who now hear me, were of the lawyers corps memorable committee; do they recollect it? That committee was a deputation of armed men, representing armed men, and assuming to represent the knowledge of law as well as its battalion, for the purpose of questioning and investigating a matter touching the state, and already decided in Parliament. I am not defending such a meeting; it stands on its own ground, and distinct from others. But, if I had gone so very far as to be a member of that committee, I would not now prove false to my colours, and pay the minister such a compliment, at the expence of my corps and my cloth, as to acknowledge that my proceedings and theirs influenced by their leaders, were in the face of the law. The Catholic convention is another object libelled by this bill. Where is the use of the reflection? Not only they who elected, and they who composed that convention, but His Majesty, who received its deputies, comes in for his share of the obloquy. I will say, it is a direct attack upon the King. His Majesty has entertained the delegates from the Roman Catholic convention; to say, then, that the Crown received an address from an unlawful assembly, is surely on attack upon its dignity. I do not love to flatter kings; but when the Crown takes the lead in a great national object, such as Catholic emancipation, though, perhaps with the advice of some, yet, certainly without that of others of his ministers, I shall be the first to thank, and the last to condemn; and yet this preamble condemns that conduct in His Majesty, a conduct for which I myself had the honour to move an address of thanks.

It is very evident, that one of the many views of this bill is to attack the Catholics. As to any evil designs which the Catholics may be said to entertain, I believe they have none. Sure I am, that the charges which have been made against the body of the Catholics are false. If there are grounds, state them; let that which is to appal us all appear; it has proved nothing but vague assertion. Why then publish a libel against three millions of His Majesty's subjects. Why vote emancipation and power at the commencement of the session, and abuse and libel at the close; and deviate completely from whatever conciliatory effects those concessions would produce? Can we suppose that the Catholics, who, under the penal code, preserved their allegiance, should become disaffected on the moment in which they had acquired such solid and inestimable advantages, and through the agency of the government they are falsely charged to wish to under-

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mine? The bitterness of expression which, in some instances, accompanied that grant, cannot exasperate them against the state, but should be rather a subject of additional thanks to the wiser part of government, who have forced the angry bigot to vote against his speech, with the humiliating privilege of babbling against his vote.

It may be to the Catholics further consolation to find, that if they are calumniated, so have been the Protestants. They who acted for the liberties of this country; they who, since 1782, struggled for bills, which, in part, government has meritoriously acceded to, are, for that very conduct, by the same false witness, vituperated expressly as men endeavouring to foment jealousies and disunion between Great Britain and Ireland. Satisfied with the success of some of their great measures, these men have learned to despise that political jury, whose testimony against public character is now exploded as his principles.

Sir, this bill not only reflects on numbers of his Majesty's subjects as guilty of a misdemeanour, but it involves them in the penalty; it is an *ex post facto* law of pains and penalties. If this bill be law, every man who composed the Catholic convention is now liable to be prosecuted for a misdemeanour; it might so happen that some of the gentlemen who vote for the bill might be their jury or their judges; how would they act? Would they on oath or as on the bench pronounce those men guilty of a misdemeanor; and which they are now ready to assert as members of Parliament? Those gentlemen may not only happen to try such offenders, but are liable to be tried themselves for such offences; for they were certainly those criminal and illegal deputies described in the act. I do not suppose government will ever think of prosecuting them; but if she should, she will, after the passing this act, have against the legality of their conduct, the authority of the legislature and their own. I have objected to this bill as an innovation on the constitution. I object to it also as an innovation on the system of criminal jurisprudence. It puts the peace-officer in the place of the court of justice, in cases where there is neither tumult nor danger of tumult. It is true the common law makes him the judge of the imminent danger to which the society is exposed, from a numerous body armed and proceeding to execute an illegal purpose, or a legal purpose in an illegal tumultuous manner; but it is the force, or imminent danger of force, that brings the subject under the cognizance of the subordinate magistrate; the illegality alone would only bring him under the cognizance of the courts of justice. Where there are circumstances of force and horror

accompanying an illegal act, then grows the power of the peace officer, for he is not the guardian of the law, but the conservator of the peace. But this bill gives that officer, in the instance of a peaceful meeting assembled to do a legal act, as to frame a petition for those who have deputed them so to do, this bill, I say, gives the peace-officer the power to judge of the fact of the deputation; of the manner of exercising that trust; and of the public nature of the object of it, with right of entry and a power to call in the military. Here is the principle of the act applied to the peaceful communication of sentiment, and an innovation of the principles of the criminal law of these countries. The object of this bill is to stigmatise the Catholic convention, and prevent the reform of Parliament; but the pretences for this bill, I think, are three; the Defenders, the United Irishmen, and an imaginary convention at Athlone: the last is not to take place; and on the two first, the bill will have no operation. Gentlemen must surely know that either this convention is not at all to take place, or taking place, would be feeble and frivolous. Such a convention as I have seen described would be indeed unseasonable, and, I will add, wholly inadmissible; but such a bill as this is not the way to defeat it. You remember a much more formidable convention than this supposed one of Athlone, a convention of armed men representing the volunteer army, sitting at the Rotunda with a guard, and preparing plans for Parliament. Some of the friends of this bill, members of this House, were deputies of that convention; accepted delegation, sat and voted, and whatever evil was incurred, had a full share in it. But how did the then Attorney-general act? Did he alter the constitution under pretence of defending it? Did he make use of popular excesses to abridge the liberty of the subject? did he give an opinion contrary to law, and then get Parliament to give an influenced judgment in support of it, and invade the constitution under pretence of declaring the law? No; when the convention attempted to act, he framed a resolution, which purported the defence of the constitution against all encroachment. The consequence was, the convention dispersed, and the constitution stood unaltered and unimpaired — unimpaired either by the encroachment of a convention, or of a convention bill. In the present case the prorogation of Parliament cannot interfere, unless government prefers a long prorogation; and sure I am that if such a thing as the described convention is to take place, it were much better to meet it with the precedent I have mentioned, than with this bill, But it is evident no such thing is now apprehended. The spirit of the people does not beat high; and

because the spirit is not high, this bill is brought forward. The friends of the bill have seized the opportunity of public panic, which certain excesses have excited. I condemn both; — the excesses and the remedy; instead of either, I am for the constitution of England.

Mr. Grattan concluded, by moving that the bill be read a second time, on the 29th of September next.

The Attorney-general (Wolfe,) opposed the motion. He denied that the bill bore a retrospect to the Catholic convention; its object was to prevent the professed design of calling a convention that was to represent the people, and overturn the Parliament. The late meeting of United Irishmen, at Dungannon, was but preparatory to a general meeting at Athlone. Such assemblies were unlawful; the right of petition was not affected, but it could not be carried on by delegation. Mr. Curran, in reply to the Attorney-general, declared he was struck with horror at hearing the first legal officer of the Crown departing from the strict letter of the law, and appealing to the shout of the House, and the "hear him!" of the country gentlemen, in order that he might be justified in subverting one of the principal pillars of the constitution. He denied that the constituent parted with all his rights when he elects a representative; he still has a right to watch the conduct of Parliament. The right to petition by delegation was confirmed by the British law, which prevented more than twenty persons from presenting a petition; and, of course, these twenty must be the delegates of the remainder. The principle had been discussed in the British Parliament, in 1780, and the right had been confirmed to the people. The motion was supported by Mr. Hardy, Mr. Duquery, and Doctor Browne; it was opposed by Mr. Corry, Sir John Parnell, Mr. Toler, Mr. Ogle, and Mr. Hobart.

On a division, there appeared for the Motion 27, Against it 128; Majority 101. Tellers for the Ayes, Major Wellesley and Mr. Perry; Noes, Doctor Browne and Mr. Serjeant Duquery.

CONVENTION BILL.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONVENTION BILL.

July 18. 1793.

THE order of the day for going into a committee on the bill to prevent the election or appointment of conventions, or unlawful assemblies, under pretence of preparing or presenting public

petitions to His Majesty or the Parliament, being read, Mr. Grattan said, it was his intention to propose, that the committee should receive a clause, to limit the duration of the act. The Attorney-general declared that he could not agree to such a clause being introduced.

Mr. GRATTAN then said: I put a question to the learned gentleman. Are the two circumstances of delegation and public concernment sufficient to constitute an unlawful assembly, except that assembly be the House of Commons? or, in other words, must any delegation, of any description of His Majesty's subjects, other than this House, for the purpose of promoting any redress of any grievance in church or state, be considered as an unlawful assembly? They have given me no answer; but they have stated a case, which is another case, and which is a quibble, and not an answer. They have said, that a representative of the people, other than the House of Commons, is an unlawful assembly. It may be so; yet a delegation for promoting redress in matter of public concernment, may not be so, because that delegation may not be, nor assume to be, a representative of the people, but of a certain description thereof; and yet the bill, both in its preamble and declaration, makes such assembly illegal. The case, therefore, stated by the gentlemen, is no more a defence of the bill, than it is an answer to my question.

The bill states, that any representation, of any description of His Majesty's subjects, for procuring redress in any manner, in any matter of public concernment, is an unlawful assembly.

The learned gentlemen say, that a representative of the people is so; which is not the case of that body, who only assemble to represent, in a particular matter, a particular province, county, city, town, district, or description of people. The case submitted to the gentlemen, and the case contained in the bill, rest illegality on the act of delegation for procuring in any manner redress in matters of public concernment. The case stated by the learned gentlemen seems to rest the point of illegality on the generality of the representation, and their reason seems to rest it there still more than their case; for instance, they say a representative of the people, other than the House of Commons, is an unlawful assembly, because the House of Commons are exclusively the representatives of the people, and, therefore, to attempt to appoint a second House of Commons is unlawful, because incompatible with the first. This reason, in support of this case, is a surrender of the principle of the bill. I *do not* say the bill is betrayed; but its defence is waved by the law.

servants of the crown; they acknowledge that there is neither statute nor adjudication in support of the principle of the bill; but they say there is reason, and that reason they allege to be this — that there cannot be at one time two representatives of the people; whereas, the principle of the bill is, that any representation not of the people only, but of any description whatever thereof, for a public purpose, save only this House, is an unlawful assembly.

The case and reasoning of the learned gentleman, would comprehend nothing but a national convention; but the cases, principle, and description of the bill, would comprehend every subdivision of delegation for public matter.

The Presbyterian committee, of which I read a petition yesterday, and which the Protestant dissenters of England have appointed by delegation to promote redress of particular grievances, touching church and state, viz. the repeal of the test act; the delegation of Quakers, if that delegation should join in an humble address for the commutation of tithes; the Presbyterian synod, if that synod should presume to interfere in behalf of their flock, in matters touching abuses in church or state: all these come within the letter of the act, though by no means within the argument which attempts to defend it. They are all delegations; and in the cases I have suggested, would be employed in procuring redress of some abuses either in church or state.

I have thus merely considered the argument as far as it declined the question I proposed, and must say that the only sense to be extracted from the argument is, that there cannot be at once two representatives of the people for the same purposes; but for different purposes, it does not follow but there may.

The House of Commons, whom we will for argument's sake, suppose the real representatives of the people, is appointed for the exercise of certain powers — powers of impeachment, powers of grant, and powers of legislation; certainly any attempt on the part of the people to give a second order of delegates authority to exercise such powers, would, in the highest degree, be illegal; or, what might seem to imply the same thing, the appointment of a second order of delegates, to represent the people generally, without any specific limitation, would be highly criminal and illegal, because that would imply the powers I have described; but the appointment of delegates for a specific and legal purpose, for instance, promoting the redress of a particular abuse touching the church or state, as the reform of Parliament, a limitation of public expences, a repeal of the test

act; such delegations which do or have existed in England and Ireland, would not be an interference with the jurisdiction of the House of Commons, nor within the reason of the case of the learned gentlemen. The people in electing members to serve in Parliament, part with some of their powers, and others they retain; the power of petitioning, of instructing, and of delivering their sense on abuses in church and state, they retain; with these powers they of necessity retain another, that of forming themselves into such voluntary organization, of committee, delegates, or representatives, which soever you please to call them, for the purpose either of preparing their petitions or of framing their resolutions, or collecting their dispersed opinions into one consistent instrument, on the object of the particular grievance, with a view to render the exercise of the power they retain, consistent, tranquil, and operative.

In the proceedings of such delegation, care must be taken to preserve the peace; and in specifying its object, care must be taken to observe the law; but if the destination of such delegation is lawful, and the proceedings peaceful, I know of no law, and the learned gentlemen have adduced neither law nor reason to pronounce it an unlawful assembly. I see plainly the necessity of leaving such powers free, because I see a time may come, we have seen when such a time did come, when the being of the constitution shall depend on the exercise of such power. Suppose a House of Commons, as was the case of the Middlesex election, conspire against the elective rights of the community. Suppose a House of Commons, as was the case of the perpetual mutiny bill, under the influence of the minister, vote the army for ever. Are the people to have no power of interfering, or, which is the same thing, no power of communicating, in order to make their interference operative and consistent? It has been said that representative conventions are illegal; but the question of legality depends on what those representative conventions are. If they are national representative conventions assuming expressly, or by the generality of their appointment, the functions of the House of Commons, they are more than illegal; but if they are representative conventions appointed for a special purpose, to prepare a petition or to promote the redress of a particular grievance, such as may obtain in church or state; for such a representative convention as committees of correspondence, or the delegation of the Quakers, or the synod of the Presbyterians, or such as the delegates of the Protestant dissenters now existing in England, I hold it that such representative conventions are not illegal.

The honourable member who had made the observation, made this distinction; for the representative convention he condemned as a mock Parliament, plainly intimating the representative conventions; not in any degree assuming the function of a Parliament, did not come within his objection. It would seem, therefore, that it is the assumption of parliamentary functions, and not the act of representation, nor the public concernment which is its object, that constitute the illegality; and this observation brings the argument of the honourable member to the same principle with that of his honourable friend, that the law will not tolerate two Houses of Commons. As the principle of the argument is the same, so shall be my answer, that the assemblies described in the bill, are not only such as assume the functions of a House of Commons, nor such as assume the character of unlimited representation, but such as are descriptions of His Majesty's subjects, however small, met on any public purpose whatsoever.

This argument, then, like the other, leaves the bill undefended. But it is advanced in further support of this argument, that the House of Commons would not receive a petition from a delegation; and it is thence inferred that the act of delegation is illegal; but it does not strike me in that manner. It would seem that this observation could only reach delegation for the purpose of presenting or subscribing petitions, not preparing petitions, nor corresponding, nor digesting resolutions, nor promoting redress of specific grievances, to all which the bill goes, to none of which the argument goes; nor does the argument even go so far as to prove the illegality of any delegation whatsoever; it only proves, that delegations for the particular purpose of presenting or subscribing petitions, is fruitless; but it does not prove the delegates to be an unlawful assembly; or that the peace-officer can disperse them, or the crown-officer prosecute them. You cannot petition Parliament by attorney, — does it follow you cannot appoint one? Association for the peace, delegations for redress, clubs for society, are all voluntary conventions, without seal, certificate, or incorporation. Parliament cannot know them by that description which they give themselves; does it follow that the law would punish them as an unlawful assembly?

The object of these meetings has, in general, been to propose matter for petition, or to collect or combine the public mind to one specific mode of remedy, and not in the person of delegates to approach the legislature; and, it is against this proceeding the bill is directed. The bill leaves the county-

meeting free; all its designs is to prevent the communication of county with county, and city with city, on the subject of public redress, and the reform of Parliament above all other subjects; and the reason is very obvious, — the resolutions of such county or aggregate meetings have proved generally ineffectual; but the resolutions formed on representative or delegated meetings have generally proved effectual; the bill leaves the people such resources as have been abortive, and only takes away all which have been successful.

It has been said in support of this bill, that the preamble contains in it no point of law whatsoever, but is one proposition, only stating a matter of fact. This I must deny; the preamble contains two propositions, the one, matter of fact or rather prophecy, which is positive, the other matter of law, which is implicative. It describes an unlawful assembly in these words, "an assembly purporting to represent the people;" (but it does not stop here) "or any description or number of the people, under pretence of preparing or presenting petitions, complaints, remonstrances, or declarations to the King or Parliament for alterations of matter in church or state, alleged grievances or other public concernment." But if there was any doubt whether the preamble implied, there can be no doubt but that the declaratory part expresses that any assembly of delegates, from any description or number of His Majesty's subjects for the purpose of procuring by petition, or in any other manner, an alteration in matters established in church or state, is unlawful. Let me ask gentlemen of the bar, what was the committee of lawyers corps in 1782; was not that very assembly a delegation from a certain description of His Majesty's subjects to procure an alteration in matters established in state; a delegation to consider a public concernment; a delegation purporting to promote the redress of grievance? There is not a description in the act that delineates an unlawful assembly, under which that committee does not come. Who appointed that committee? A certain numerous description of His Majesty's subjects. What was the object of their delegation? To consider matter of state then settled by the law; that is, to report whether the measures taken by the Parliaments of the two kingdoms, were, as unanimously alleged by the Parliament of Ireland, adequate in point of law to liberate this kingdom from the legislative interference of Great Britain. And what was their determination? In direct contradiction to a settlement concluded by both Houses of Parliament. They reported that the remedy which our Parliament had deemed sufficient was inadequate; and they concluded with an address of their own, namely, that

a bill of renunciation ought to pass in the Parliament of England, and a bill of right in the Parliament of Ireland.

Here is a delegation taking into consideration every thing which this bill forbids; public concernment, redress of grievance, and a particular matter vitally affecting the state, and just settled by the law; and here is a report of that delegation opening that settlement to procure an alteration therein.

There were, indeed, two circumstances which distinguish this delegation from the others which the bill describes and declares to be unlawful. The committee were delegated by an armed body, to impeach the sufficiency of a parliamentary settlement. Do I wish to reflect on their motives? No; they thought the independency of this country was a matter of state, too valuable, though settled by law, to be left entirely to any body of men, even the House of Commons, or to any individual of that House, however well disposed. It was an occasion in which zeal, and even suspicion, was commendable. I differed from the members of that committee in the doctrines they then advanced against the proceedings of Parliament. I differ from some of them in the doctrines they now advance against the proceedings of their own committee; and it is by a singular fatality that it should fall to my lot to resist, and to theirs to support a bill whose preamble and whose declaration do, in the fullest and least equivocal manner pronounce their committee to have been an unlawful assembly, and their conduct to have been illegal.

While I combat the argument, I must give every due praise to the abilities of the learned gentleman who advanced it — for taste as a scholar, knowledge as a lawyer, and extensive, liberal, and deep erudition. It has been said that the bill does not affect committees appointed *bonâ fide* to prepare petitions or other matter, but only such as make petition a pretence for delegation — ridiculous! The bill goes against all delegation for public matter, and provides that the pretence of petitioning shall not cover the transaction.

Gentlemen having, in my humble apprehension, misstated the law, proceed, to my certain knowledge, to misstate the fact; and they insist that in England no convention or committee, such as the bill describes, has taken place; and this they assign as a reason why in England there is no prohibitory statute. I mentioned yesterday one delegation this moment existing in England; a delegation from no less a description of his Majesty's subjects than the Protestant dissenters in England, appointed for the express purpose of procuring an alteration in a matter by a law established in church and

state; the repeal of the test act. I beg to remind gentlemen of another delegation that took place in London. It was a delegation from that description of His Majesty's subjects which comprehends the manufacturing interest of England, and was deputed to consider matter that related to the state of both kingdoms — the commercial propositions. I beg leave to turn the recollection of gentlemen to other conventions in England; to those that sat in London in 1780, consisting of a deputation from above sixteen counties, delegating representatives for the purpose of forming committees of correspondence, to procure an alteration in matters touching the state — or, in other words, to frame petitions for these several counties for the reduction of the expences of the government; and further, to promote the objects of those petitions, among the number of those delegates were some from the city of London, appointed by an act of the corporation, attended with a resolution, that the Recorder of London should be assistant to the delegation, a man of great celebrity and knowledge both as a lawyer and a constitutionalist.

There were other most respectable names, members and chairmen of these committees; the Duke of Portland, Lord Spencer, Mr. Fox; the name of Cavendish, and most of the whig interest of England. The Duke of Rutland was chairman to one of the committees. There was our Burke; there were others; there was the Marquis of Buckingham and Mr. Grenville. I do not find any proceeding against these meetings as unlawful assemblies, and yet all these came within the letter and spirit of this bill; they came within the letter of your act; for they were delegations from certain descriptions of His Majesty's subjects to procure an alteration in matter touching the state, *viz.* the expences of the King's government; they come within the spirit, because the object of these committees was to procure, as that of the bill is to prevent concert — concert among the people, in redressing those abuses in the state, which a House of Commons, as is now returned by boroughs, and influenced by ministers, will not attend to, except when such concert out of doors, as happened in counties in almost all great questions, and did happen in the case of those very committees, renders it necessary to attend and concede. I have shown you the practice in England, and that the advocates of the bill in matter of fact at least are entirely mistaken. I think it has been already shown that they are so in matter of law, and I beg to ask whether it is reasonable to suppose that such practice, so general, so repeated, and so countenanced, is illegal, and whether such doc-

trines as the advocates of the bill have advanced, unsupported by statute, unwarranted by adjudication, and in the face of such a number of precedents, indeed of daily experience, and of their own memorable example, is law? I must, therefore, conclude this part of my answer by observing, that the arguments of this bill do not appear to have the support either of the law or of fact.

As to the expediency, I beg to speak a few words. This bill is said to be an expedient to restore peace; — why, then, is it a reflection? why do the preamble and the declaration pronounce every man who has been a delegate; all the volunteers, the delegates at Dungannon, the delegates of the convention, the committee of the lawyers corps, and the corps that appointed that committee — the committee of the Catholics, their late convention, and all the Catholics who appointed that convention, that is, the whole Catholic body, offenders — men guilty of an unlawful assembly, and this moment liable to be prosecuted? For so much has the bill in object, not the peace of the country, but reflection on great bodies, and the gratification of spleen at the expence of the constitution, by voting false doctrine into law, and the brightest passages of your history into unlawful assemblies.

Gentlemen have conceived this bill an expedient to quell the insurgents; let them read the bill. It is not a riot act; the riot act seemed forgotten until a friend of mine put it into his temporary statute bill; it does not go against riots that are, but conventions that are not. The title of the bill as first brought in, was to prevent riots and tumults arising from conventions; but as the bill had nothing to say to riots, and no riots appeared to have arisen from conventions, such title was in decency dropped, and the real object of the bill professed — an act against conventions.

The bill, therefore, neither is, nor professes to be a bill against riots; it is only an expedient against conventions, and only an expedient for peace, as far as conventions now disturb it. Sir, there are none.

But gentlemen say, a national convention at Athlone was intended. Sir, I do believe that such a one was intended some time ago, and that now it is not so; or, if now intended, that it would be trifling and contemptible. But if that is the object of the bill, direct the bill to that object. Do not extend the bill to every delegation from any county, city, town, district, from any description of any number of his Majesty's subjects appointed to procure redress in any abuse relating to

church or state. My objection to your bill is, that it is a trick; making a supposed national convention at Athlone in 1793, a pretext for preventing delegation for ever.

I have already said, that such a meeting as was invited to assemble at Athlone should be withstood. I know not what such meeting would be, except from the summonses read by gentlemen in this House; and such a meeting, I repeat it, as would assemble pursuant to such summonses, with such a view, and under all the circumstances held out, should be withstood; for such a meeting would not be an assembly to promote the reform of Parliament, but to put itself in the place of Parliament. But does it follow, therefore, that the people should lose the power of delegation for ever. I acknowledge the people retain their right to hold primary assemblies, such as meet in the aggregate; but do we not know that such meetings have been inefficacious; the object not of your respect, but of the courtiers scorn and ridicule? and, therefore, the people have resorted to delegates who have given to their wishes concert and effect; and, therefore, I fear it is, that a bill has been introduced when parliamentary reform is in contemplation, to prevent such delegation, leaving to the people such popular meetings as gentlemen flatter themselves cannot have any popular effect.

My apprehension, therefore, is, that the supposed meeting at Athlone is a pretence; and that the real object of this bill is to prevent in future all popular effect whatsoever, particularly now, when reform has been proposed in this House, a measure offensive to all men who dislike the people; offensive to most of those who dislike the Catholics, and detestable to those men who hate both. Does it follow, because the supposed national convention at Athlone should be prevented, that all committees of correspondence on the subject of redress should be put down for ever? No county, no city, no description of men can delegate a few individuals to concert the most legal and effectual method of procuring in an acknowledged abuse a temperate remedy.

I am against this bill, because it is not confined to the supposed convention, but is levelled against all popular delegation in all time to come; and as I was against the excesses of some of the people which shook the principles of government, so am I now against excesses on the other side, which attack the principles of liberty. I consider the bill as one excess reforming another — as the violence of one side attacking the constitution, as that of the other did the government. It seems to me to be compounded of a dislike to the people in general, and the Catholics in particular; a concern at past

acquisition, and a present apprehension of the reform of Parliament. It avails itself of the present panic to abridge popular rights, and it finds support in sanguine but weak minds, who know there is a disease, but have not sense enough to discover the remedy, and think that a convention bill is to restore us all to peace; who think, that in time of local disturbance, the remedy is a bill, not against the particular disturbance, but against liberty and the people.

I must repeat my conviction against this bill, and beg to resort to the memories of gentlemen wherein to deposit my entire disapprobation of this measure.

Mr. Grattan then moved that the words, "be it declared," should be omitted; and also, that the duration of the bill should be limited to one year.

This amendment was opposed by Mr. Marcus Beresford, Mr. Burton Conyngham, Mr. Day, (afterwards Judge Day), Mr. Johnson, (afterwards Judge Johnson), Mr. Ogle, and Mr. Chamberlain; it was supported by Mr. Duquery, Major Doyle, and Mr. Curran. Major Doyle said: if the bill attached solely to the object professed; namely, a national convention at Athlone, it should be supported; but when it was assumed, that the late Catholic convention was the cause of this measure; the proceedings of the assembly, whose prayer has been granted, are stigmatised; and the benignity that has flowed from the Throne, is condemned. If the proceedings of the Catholics were illegal, Parliament was the cause; Parliament had driven them to a convention, by refusing their petition, and had assigned as a reason, "That the framers affected to speak the sentiments of the body, without having been deputed." They, of course, formed a convention, and Parliament rewarded that convention by granting what it desired; if discontents existed, this bill would render them more dangerous, by rendering discussion secret, and that might end in conspiracy.

Mr. Curran defended the position, that the people, after representation, had still a right to express their sentiments by delegation; and he instanced the petitions from the counties in England, in 1780, when it was well known that the committee that brought them before Parliament was a delegated assembly. The people, it must be admitted, possessed the right to petition; they must, therefore, possess that right in the manner most convenient to themselves, which evidently was by delegation. The people did not assemble *pleno comitatu*, and exercise their rights, because that would be attended with tumult. If the people then assembled in their respective towns and counties, would not the same inconvenience follow; why, then, should they be refused the mode of assembling by delegation?

The question was then put on Mr. Grattan's amendment, and negatived without a division. The bill went through a committee, and on the ensuing day was read a third time, and passed.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.—LORD LIEUTENANT'S SPEECH.

January 21. 1794.

THE session was opened by the Lord-lieutenant, with the following speech to both Houses.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"I have His Majesty's commands to meet you in Parliament.

"You must have felt with the highest satisfaction, that, by the success of His Majesty's arms and those of his allies, the hopes of France, in their unprovoked declaration of war, to impair the stability, or shake the constitution of Great Britain and Ireland, have been utterly disappointed.

"The forces of His Majesty and the allies, are in possession of many important fortresses which belonged to the French, and many of their oppressive and unjust conquests have been wrested from them; and while the trade of the empire has been generally protected, the resources which our enemies derived from their wealthy settlements and extensive commerce have been almost entirely cut off.

"I have the satisfaction to acquaint you, that the spirit of insurrection which was for some time prevalent among the lower orders of the people, is in general suppressed. No exertion shall be wanting on my part to bring them to a due sense of order and subordination, and to prevent and punish the machinations of those who may aim to seduce them from their accustomed loyalty into acts of sedition and outrage.

"The law for rendering a militia in this kingdom effectual has been carried successfully into execution; and I am happy to find that the people are at length fully reconciled to this institution, which has already been attended by the most beneficial consequences, in producing internal tranquillity, and contributing to the general strength and force of the empire.

"I am commanded to acquaint you, that His Majesty has appointed a commission under the great seal, to execute the office of lord high treasurer of this kingdom; in order that the payment of the civil list granted to His Majesty, and a regular appropriation of the revenue to distinct services, may be carried into execution in a manner as conformable to the practice of Great Britain as the relative situation of this kingdom will permit.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

"I have ordered the national accounts to be laid before you, as well as estimates for the service of the ensuing year. It is painful to me to observe that the exigencies of the times will require a large supply and additional resources; but, when you consider that this is a war of absolute necessity, and that you are contending for your liberty, property, and religion, I doubt not

that you will chearfully contribute to support the honour of His Majesty's crown, and the essential interests of the kingdom.

" My Lords and Gentlemen,

" The agriculture, the manufactures, and particularly the linen manufacture of Ireland, the Protestant charter schools, and various other institutions of public utility, have so constantly received the benefit of your care and liberality, that I need not particularly at this time, inculcate their importance.

" His Majesty has the fullest reliance upon the loyalty and attachment of his people of Ireland. You are now, by the unjust aggression of France, involved in a contest for your religion, for your constitution, and for the preservation of every principle which upholds social order, or gives security to your persons or properties. In such a cause, His Majesty has no doubt of being cordially supported by the efforts of all his subjects, in resisting the desperate designs of men who are endeavouring to erect their own power and dominion on the ruins of law and order, and to involve every government of Europe in a general scene of confusion and anarchy.

" His Majesty's object is peace, and he will exert himself, in conjunction with his allies, whenever an occasion shall present itself for obtaining this desirable end, without surrendering the honour of his crown, or sacrificing the present or future security of his people and the rest of Europe.

" You may depend upon my faithful representations of your services to His Majesty, and I will zealously co-operate with your exertions for the welfare and prosperity of Ireland."

Lord Boyle moved the address to His Majesty, which was seconded by the honourable Mr. Wandesford Butler.

Mr. GRATTAN spoke as follows: Sir, on a subject of such consequence, at so short a notice, and so imperfect a hearing, it would be difficult to say much, and yet improper not to say something. To speak at large on a subject but just communicated, is above my powers. I cannot, however, bring myself to give a silent vote on this occasion, though what I shall say will perhaps not be entirely approved of, either by those who act with administration, or by those who disapprove of the war.

With respect to the principle of conduct which should always actuate Ireland, I have ever had, and shall ever continue to have but one opinion, — that Ireland should improve her constitution, correct its abuses, and assimilate it as nearly as possible to that of Great Britain; that whenever administration should attempt to act unconstitutionally, but, above all, whenever they should tamper with the independence of Parliament, they ought to be checked by all the means that the constitution justifies. But, that these measures, this general plan of conduct should be pursued by Ireland, with a

fixed, steady, and unalterable resolution, to stand or fall with Great Britain. Whenever Great Britain, therefore, should be clearly involved in war, it is my idea that Ireland should grant her a decided and unequivocal support; except, that war should be carried on against her own liberty.

In pursuance of this principle, it is unnecessary in my mind for Ireland to consider the merits of the present war, the causes in which it originated, or the manner in which it is carried on. The speech from the throne has talked of the successes of the war. I am sorry that these successes have not been quite so brilliant as have generally been experienced in wars with France. Finding therefrom Great Britain not only involved in a war, but in a war somewhat unsuccessful, I think the courage of this country more peculiarly called on to give her prompt and efficacious assistance. Even if the contest had been much more unsuccessful, I would still think it necessary for Ireland to enter zealously into the interests of the sister country. If in the seven years war we supported Great Britain, without a constitution and without commerce, shall we now, when we have acquired both commerce and constitution, be cold in her cause? Did Ireland talk fallaciously when at the time she was seeking that constitution and commerce, she promised to have but one interest with Great Britain? Or, shall she now show that her professions at that time were sincere, and prove by her conduct at this interesting crisis, that the best way to secure the attachment of Ireland is to do her benefits.

I do not mean to go at large into the subject of the war. I only mean to declare my opinion, that even if I disapproved of the measure of entering into the war, or if I thought the mode in which it was prosecuted a wrong one, yet finding Great Britain involved, I would vote for giving her the utmost support which the country could afford; because I think the two countries should stand or fall together.

There are some parts of the address which I would wish to correct, and something which I would wish to supply. That part which alludes to the success of *His* Majesty's arms, I wish should be omitted, because it would be better if nothing were introduced which might give an appearance of *unreality* to the address, or, which might make it look rather like the echo of the speech, than the genuine sense of the House.

With respect to that clause which mentioned the spirit of insurrection "in the lower orders of the people," I would correct it by changing the phrase for *some* of *the lower* orders of the people; for, certainly, a spirit of insurrection had not appeared in all the lower orders of the people, but only in

some particular description of them. I would also have thanked His Majesty for his gracious interference in the last session, in reconciling the differences between his Irish subjects; and, I would have thanked him also for the other conciliatory measures of the last session; for his concession of the hereditary revenue, &c. &c., because I think that when His Majesty shows an inclination to make such important concession, the acknowledgment of the subject cannot be too prompt.

The latter part of the address, which thanks His Majesty for his expression of readiness to co-operate with Parliament, I think extremely proper. On that expression of the speech every man is at liberty to put his own construction. I suppose it to mean, that if any further measures were necessary for the improvement or security of the constitution, His Majesty is ready to concur with Parliament in their adoption. For my part, I think further measures are necessary; reform for instance; a subject which was brought before Parliament in the last session by an honourable friend of mine, and which I hope he will take up again. Though I think this measure is essentially necessary, I by no means wish that it should be *stipulated* for as the price of the assistance which might be demanded of the country for the war. All I mean to say is, that it ought to be brought forward as well as such other measures as might be necessary for completing the assimilation of the Irish constitution to that of Great Britain; and I think the declaration of His Majesty would justify, if any justification were necessary, the bringing forward these measures again.

I wish it at the same time to be understood that whatever opposition I may make during the session, shall be made without reference to the question of war, on which, I believe, there is but one opinion. I acknowledge that in some former sessions I warmly opposed the administration, because I thought that they had assumed too high a tone against the people, and that they had opposed measures essential to the constitution. In the last session, I admit that they have in some degree corrected that conduct, for which I am willing to allow them all due praise.

The address was agreed to *nem. con.*

FRENCH WAR.

February 5. 1794.

ON this day, Sir Lawrence Parsons, (afterwards Lord Rosse), moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Lord-lieutenant, that he will be pleased to lay before His Majesty the humble desire of this House, that His Majesty will graciously condescend to order to be laid before this House copies of his declaration, together with copies of the several conventions and treaties with different powers which have been laid before the British Parliament, relative to the present war." The motion was seconded by Mr. Wm. Tighe, and was supported by Mr. Sergeant Duquery, Mr. Curran, Mr. Egan, Dr. Browne, Mr. Robert Stewart, (afterwards Lord Castlereagh), on the ground that the Irish Parliament, as a matter of right as well as duty and interest, was bound to investigate the causes of the war. The motion was opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, (Sir J. Parnell), Mr. Cooke, Mr. Barrington, Mr. G. Ponsonby, and Mr. Beresford.

Mr. GRATTAN said: Sir, however I may differ from gentlemen with whom I generally concur, I shall this night, consistent with the vote I gave on the first day of the session in favour of the war, resist the present measure. I do not doubt that the honourable gentlemen who introduced it had very proper motives. The motion before you, purports to be a motion for papers; but the declared object of its supporters is to condemn the war, — that war which those gentlemen pledged themselves to support, and for which they now declare themselves determined to grant the army and the supply. On the ground, therefore, laid for this motion, by those who have supported the honourable baronet, I shall give it a direct negative, as tending to undermine your own proceedings, to retract your plighted sentiments, and to raise a mutiny against your own taxes. Such a proceeding would, in my mind, bear a colour of hesitation, unbecoming the honour of this country, and by such conduct Ireland would prove herself, instead of the best, the meanest ally of England. Some gentlemen in support of the motion, have not indeed gone so far as to condemn the war, but have only desired to suspend their opinion until they receive the copies of the treaties, declarations, and conventions, from England; and in the mean time they declare themselves ready to vote the army and the supply for this very war, on which they declare they have formed no opinion whatever. I dwell not

on the folly of such a proceeding; I tremble at the mischief. What! tell France (an invasion impending perhaps on one or both of these countries,) that you have not made up your minds on the war; thus excite a diffidence on the part of Great Britain; teach France to consider Ireland as despondings, and induce her to intrigue with our people and attempt a descent upon our country; tell her, that you are waiting on a revolutionary-state opinion, until papers shall be sent from England, and a committee shall sit *flagrante bello*, and have made its report on the causes, considerations, and merits of this war. The period is said to be awful. If any thing could make it desperate, it would be such a condition. It would be a promulgation to the troops on the coast of France, that we were not decided to stand by England, and that this was the moment in which the suspense of our sentiments was to be determined, by some stroke from that country. Considering the principle of this motion in reference to Great Britain, you told her in the opening of this session you would stand by her in this war. You tell her now by this motion that you beg leave to consider it, and have therefore called for papers in order to form a deliberate judgment on mature and late consideration. Is not this a retraction of your former opinion? Is not this chilling your own efforts? changing a positive pledge to support a war, into a languid disposition to enquire into its origin, while England remains, in the interim, in doubt, whether she can depend on you, whether you will not take the lead in the desertion, or, as has been the tendency of some speeches to-night, whether, while you affect to support her by your arms, you may not damn that support by your censure, and declare that you think France is in the right, though you support Great Britain.

As to your own people, see the effect of such a motion. You tax them for the war; you tell them at the same time, in this motion, that you have not as yet made up your mind upon the subject; you profess an utter ignorance of the justice and propriety of those taxes, and enable the people to tell you that they are taxed by Parliament for a war, the grounds, justice, and necessity of which that Parliament declares itself a stranger to, and is only now in a state of enquiry. Thus you arm your own people against your own taxes by your own authority. I want to know, say gentlemen, whether this war is to partition France, to exterminate its liberty, and to set up the old constitution? whether it is to be persevered in to the last drop of our blood, rather than treat with the existing government? and therefore I wish for treaties. What treaties? — treaties which can resolve none

of those questions, which will leave these gentlemen as free as ever to rail at the war. This, put in common language, is this, — we want to have repeated opportunities of considering this war, first, by the artificial question of calling for papers, and after, by objecting to the sufficiency of these papers, and by repeating the same question with the same insinuation against the war. And the best way of judging what use gentlemen will make of these papers, is by observing what use they have made of the motion for them, — an attack by insinuation, or directly, on the wisdom, justice, or necessity of continuing the war. And the effects of such attacks, if often repeated, must be to raise murmurs against your taxes. But gentlemen, aware that they wanted subsidiary ground, have said, they call for these papers merely to show their power of calling for treaties. The answer to that is, that the right in the Irish Parliament to call for treaties, to enquire into the causes, considerations, and condition of a war, is admitted on every side, in the fullest, broadest, and most unequivocal manner; but when the purpose for which these papers are called, comes out in debate, to be the retractation of an opinion already given, or of a support already promised, and put this moment to be voted, there the House will object to the motion for papers, not on the principle of right, but because it objects to the use which is to be made of them. The House will see that the motion for papers under these circumstances, is nothing more than an artificial motion to bring into debate objections against the war, and the argument founded on the right of this House to call for such, will then appear to be nothing more than an artificial argument, to interest the pride of this assembly in the abuse of an unquestionable privilege, which it proposed to abuse, in order to assert.

But, say gentlemen, we never had any treaties before us; — you had the Spanish treaty laid before you, and must have every treaty laid before you, if you choose to call for it; but you will not call for any treaty merely for the purpose of retracting either a support which you have promised, or a sentiment which you have plighted. But are those gentlemen who call for treaties under pretence of information, ignorant, as they profess to be, of the state of the war? What treaty is necessary to inform them that France is sending an army to her coast, and meditates an invasion? In such a situation are they to appoint a committee of enquiry to investigate papers, or a committee of supply to vote the army? *Do not they*, as well as any one know, that the cause of the war is now lost in the consequence; and that the question, supposing it ever to

have been a question, is not, whether England will partition France, but whether France will invade England,. I would not on this question give a silent vote, but rather meet directly any unpopularity which might attend the support I mean to give government; and I am authorized by my honourable friend (Mr. Curran) to say, that on the subject of the war his sentiments coincide with mine.

The motion goes to excite commotion instead of unanimity: yet, in voting against it, I by no means bind myself not to enquire hereafter respecting the conduct and object of the war; but I consider the moment of going into the committee of supply a most improper one to institute such an enquiry.

The House divided on Sir Laurence Parsons' motion; — Ayes 9, Noes 128; Majority 119. Tellers for the Ayes, Sir Laurence Parsons and Mr. William Tighe. For the Noes, Mr. Marcus Beresford, and Colonel Arthur Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington.)

COMMERCIAL REGULATION WITH ENGLAND.

MR. GRATTAN PROPOSES HIS RESOLUTION REGARDING THE TRADE BETWEEN IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN.

February 20. 1794.

MR. GRATTAN rose to make his promised motion. He begged leave to remind the House that the subject which he was now about to submit to their consideration, he had brought forward in the last session of Parliament, and it had been mentioned also in a former session. In considering this subject, my first intention was to have moved that an humble address be laid before His Majesty, that he would be graciously pleased to order to be laid before the British Parliament the tariff of duties paid by Ireland on the importation of goods of the manufacture of England, and expressive of our wish to maintain a commercial intercourse with our sister country. But, on giving the subject more attention, I am of opinion that bringing it forward by way of motion similar to that which I made last session, would be the most eligible mode; and the motion I have now to make is precisely the same as the one last session. The Irish tariff on British manufactures is now before the House; and I could wish that the English duties on Irish manufactures should be reduced to that tariff. It is a thing not begged by the country, nor exacted; but it is ex-

pected, — an expectation founded on the Irish market already given, on a confidence in our pretensions, on England's sense of them, and on a joint sense of common interest.

I will not go into a recital of service. A recital of service is a suggestion of ingratitude. I condemn those who tell Ireland she cannot exist without England, and those who tell England she cannot exist without Ireland. If I was to give an opinion, it should be, that the two kingdoms were mutually necessary to each other; or rather, that in their connected state, they are invincible, and make that connection the pride of both, instead of the degradation of either: it is on this principle I wish to draw the bonds somewhat closer. The act of annexation was much; but the indefinite power of commercial intercourse, their mutual presence at each other's market, the correspondence of bills of exchange, the intertwining of private interest, the events of political connection, would domesticate that connection, and bring it somewhat nearer the home-felt motive of private interest, and those springs of the human mind which are nearest the principles of its action.

It is, therefore, my wish to mass and compound the objects of the two islands in every possible combination and modification of commercial intercourse, and in all the various modes of human dealing: my principle of common intercourse is equality; a principle recognized last session by the ministers of the Crown; a principle of the growth of the constitution, and of human understanding; a principle to which men would be faithful, because it is their interest to be faithful to it; a principle which leaves every thing open to industry, and nothing open to clamour; a principle which should form the *base* of commerce and of empire.

The principle which I adopt is equality: the principle which I explode is monopoly. It is the old colonial principle that England adopted with regard to this country. Ireland was to grow and consume for another country, with an exception in favour of the linen manufacture, to enable her to sustain that bad situation, — a system which would not be long borne by her prosperity, and could not be long borne by her poverty; a system of commercial separation counteracting political connection; a system now exploded in principle, and soon to be exploded in practice. Suppose that exclusive system had been extended to linen, and that Ireland had no one manufacture of the British market, would not the connection have been less strong? If Ireland were to reciprocate and exclude England from her market as she herself is ex-

cluded, would not the connection be less strong? It is used as an argument, that the only reason why it is not pernicious, is, that it is not reciprocated; but I say that that which, if done by both, would be prejudicial, cannot be wise if done by either.

In 1784 there was an outcry for protecting duties in Ireland; whence that outcry but from the prohibitory duties of England? Manufacturers published the two tariffs; the English which excluded, and the Irish which admitted; and they called for a commercial separation by the authority of British example. Such prohibitory duties were in fact not duties of protection, but duties of irritation. Such a principle has yielded in the minds of men (though not in the statute book) to equality; and that equality is best contained in the Irish tariff. I wish to submit this, therefore, as a model of duty. Why the Irish tariff? Because the repeal of duties on both sides would be a novelty to the interest and the minds of both countries; because the reduction of duties to the Irish tariff is an experiment for which the minds of both are prepared. Ireland has found her manufactures to a certain degree encreased, notwithstanding those duties; and England, with those duties against her, has been able to establish herself in our market. With those duties to protect her, she cannot fear that Ireland could establish her manufactures to any extravagant degree in her's; besides, the two Houses, at the time of the first propositions, did decide in favour of that tariff. I, therefore, submit it as a principle already decided, and an experiment already made. Where then, it might be asked, was the advantage to Ireland? I cannot conceive it is possible that a country like Ireland, lying alongside so great a consumer as England, would not be able to export many smaller things, many coarser manufactures, such as would make a considerable addition to the industry of Ireland, and would make no deduction from the industry, but an addition to the wealth and convenience of Great Britain.

I do not say it offers such brilliant and immediate advantages as should call for payment on our side, or panic on the part of England, but it does offer a medium of advantage to both, such as secures England against a war of protecting-duties, and promises to Ireland a gradual reward for progressive industry. If I was to state the present advantage arising from such reduction, I would say, to Ireland it would be in her own market a bolder speculation, to England, in our market a security against reciprocal prohibition, and to both countries, a political connection, corroborated and harmonized by a better and freer commercial intercourse.

From what I have said, it must appear that it is not my idea that Ireland should pay for this chance of the British market more than she has already paid. The principle is equality; the consideration is market for market; the substance of her own market for the privilege of admission into that of Great Britain. Revenue she cannot give; constitution she cannot give; and her market she has given already. On the same principle I am against instituting a negociation for the purpose of final adjustment, because every thing on the part of Ireland was adjusted already, for she has given her market and she can give no more, and if the mind of England is not yet ripe to reciprocate our tariff, rather than institute a negotiation between the two countries. I would prefer leaving the business to such remedies as Ireland can administer, to herself and to time, which discovers those remedies that best correct commercial jealousy, and settle public interest. The House remembers the propositions; the first propositions, except those which related to revenue, were wisdom; but they were a train of negotiation which called forth a train of passions, panics, and calculations.

An attempt of another negotiation for what was called *final adjustment*, would be a similar anxiety, more certain to commit the passions than to compose the interests. If, therefore, England is not sensible that Ireland has done every thing on her part, and has not made up her mind to this tariff, I shall lament, but I will not negotiate. On the same principle, I will not divide the House on this question, lest there should appear a second opinion upon pretensions so obvious; lest a difference about the mode of conveying those pretensions to the Throne, should appear a difference about the pretensions themselves; and lest we should appear to be soliciting some great and immediate commercial advantage, when in fact we are only deprecating a great commercial unkindness not unaccompanied with a certain degree of commercial prejudice and political jealousy. I therefore move this to solicit a repetition of opinion and a declaration of sentiment; to revive or reinforce the representation of His Majesty's ministers here, in conveying to England our wishes and expectations with great respect and not without dignity; yet it must be recollected, that this idea has not grown out of the present conjunction, but from the East India bill of the last year, and was an adjourned question of the last session of Parliament, entirely supported and strongly recommended by the then secretary, who acceded to many of our measures, and whose political principles improved, and whose manners softened by high situation, gave a proof of a good understanding and a high descent.

If this question should bring forth (yet why should it?) expostulations from that valuable but sanguine race of men, the British manufacturers, these are four answers which the minister may rely on. 1st, Our exertions; which, however, have more dignity when we speak of them with modesty. 2d, The experiment of the Irish tariff. Then with those duties in her favour, Ireland has not been able to secure her own market; with these duties against her, could she be able to usurp the market of England? 3d. The French treaty. France manufacturing. France made the following experiment. She reduced her duties to 10 per cent. in favour of England, and England did the same in favour of France. The consequence was, that England sent her manufactures into the French market, and France could not send her's into the British. From which experiment three inferences follow:

1st, That the English prohibitory duties are not necessary to protect the British market against Ireland.

2d, That they ought not to be necessary to protect her against her own fears.

3d, That they are after the French treaty, duties of mere imitation. Ireland admits England. France admits Ireland. England admits France and excludes Ireland. This statement, gentlemen might say, was exaggerated. The duties which are liable to such exaggerated statements should be abated.

The 4th answer is the Irish market, — that it is in a great degree possessed by the British manufacturer: but it is not ascertained. The minister who reduces the prohibitory duties of England, ascertains the market of Ireland. Let the benefit Ireland is likely to derive from the privilege of admission to the English market be compared with the security so ascertained against protecting duties which England will derive from the abatement of her duties, and it would be found that the advantage was not on the side of the former; and perhaps there would be found that medium of advantage to both which would be a just ground of proceeding. On that principle I move, "That, in order to promote commercial equality, and to improve commercial intercourse, it is necessary that the manufactures of Ireland should be received in the ports of Great Britain on the same terms as the manufactures of Great Britain are received in the ports of Ireland."

Mr. Stuart of Killymoon, seconded the motion. Mr. Secretary Douglass complimented Mr. Grattan on his patriotism and ability. He had laid this country and the empire under such obligations to him, as would alone be sufficient to immortalize his name, as that of a great and a good man. He said he (Mr. Douglass) was too recently arrived in Ireland to have acquired such

a knowledge as would enable him to debate a motion of this importance; and as he thought the present time unfit for the agitation of such a question, and as it might tend to irritate men's minds, he would move the question of adjournment. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell,) Mr. Duquery, Mr. Vandeleur, Mr. Curran, Mr. Brooke, and Mr. Ponsonby, supported the resolution. Mr. Grattan then said, that as both sides of the House seemed satisfied with the propriety and justice of the accommodation proposed, he would not divide the House on the question.

REFORM IN PARLIAMENT.

MR. PONSONBY INTRODUCES HIS PLAN OF REFORM.

March 4. 1794.

MR. WILLIAM BRABAZON PONSONBY rose to present his bill on the subject of reform; he had taken up the question last session, and the reception which the bill had then met with, induced the hope that its principle was approved of by the House. An objection then existing against the measure had since been removed. The country was then in a state of disturbance; it was now in a state of tranquillity. He presented the bill, which was read a first time, and was as follows:

"A Bill for amending and improving the state of the representation of the people in Parliament.

"Whereas the state of the representation of the people in Parliament is greatly defective, and it would tend much to protect the liberty of the subject, and to preserve our excellent constitution, if the people of this realm were more fairly and equally represented in Parliament,

"Be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that from and after the expiration or dissolution of this present Parliament, the number of knights to be elected and returned to represent each county within this kingdom in any future Parliament to be hereafter holden and kept within this realm, shall be three instead of two knights, as heretofore used and accustomed; and for that end and purpose the freeholders in each and every county within this kingdom (who have by law a right to vote for members to serve in Parliament, and none other) are hereby authorized, empowered, and required, at every general election to be hereafter holden for members to serve in Parliament, to choose and elect three persons to serve as knights or representatives in Parliament for said county; which said three persons so elected shall be duly returned as knights or

members to serve in Parliament for said county; and the said knights or members so elected and returned, shall from thenceforth have, possess, and enjoy all the rights, powers, authorities, and privileges, which are possessed and enjoyed by the knights who now sit in Parliament within this realm.

"And be it enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that from and after the expiration or dissolution of this present Parliament, the number of citizens to be elected and returned to represent the city of Dublin in Parliament shall be three; and that the number of citizens to be elected and returned to represent the city of Cork in Parliament shall be three; and for that end and purpose, the freemen and freeholders of the said city of Dublin, who are by law entitled to vote for members to serve in Parliament, and none other, are hereby authorized, empowered, and required, at every general election to be hereafter holden for members to serve in Parliament for the said city, from and after the period aforesaid, to choose and elect three persons to serve as citizens or representatives in Parliament for said city of Dublin; and the freemen and freeholders of the said city of Cork are hereby authorized and required, at every general election to be hereafter holden for members to serve in Parliament for the said city, to choose and elect three persons to be citizens or representatives in Parliament for said city of Cork; and the said three persons so chosen and elected as members for the said city of Dublin, shall be duly returned as members to serve in Parliament for said city, and said persons so chosen and elected for the said city of Cork, shall be duly returned as members to serve in Parliament for said city; and all the said several citizens so elected and returned to serve in Parliament shall from thenceforth have, possess, and enjoy all the rights, powers, authorities, and privileges which are now possessed and enjoyed by any citizen or citizens already elected and returned to sit in Parliament.

"Provided always, that nothing herein contained shall be deemed or taken to give to any city or town within this kingdom, which now is or hereafter shall be made a county of a city, or a county of a town, a right or power of its so being a county of a city, or a county of a town, to choose and elect more than two members to serve in Parliament for such city or town, it being the true intent and meaning of this act, to give and grant the said power of electing and returning three members to serve in Parliament to each of the thirty-two counties into which this kingdom is now divided, and to the cities of Dublin and Cork, and to no other counties, cities, or towns whatsoever."

"And be it hereby further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that when in any future Parliament to be hereafter holden and kept within this realm, any vacancy or vacancies shall happen to arise during the continuance of the said Parliament by the death or expulsion of all or any of the said persons so returned to serve in Parliament for any of the said counties, or for either of the said cities of Dublin or Cork, or in case all or any of the said three persons so returned, shall be afterwards declared and adjudged not duly elected, pursuant to the laws now in force in this kingdom

for the trial of petitions or controverted elections, or in case that, from any other cause whatsoever, the seat or seats in Parliament of all or any of the said three persons so elected and returned shall become vacant; in every such case a new writ or new writs shall issue to the returning officer of the said county or counties, and of the said city or cities respectively, for the purpose of electing and returning one or more person or persons (as the case may require) in the room or stead of him or them whose seat or seats have so become vacant, in the same manner as writs now issue to supply the vacancy of any seat or seats in Parliament, and thereupon the freeholders of the said county or counties, and the freemen and freeholders of the said city or cities, who by law are authorised to vote for members to serve in Parliament, shall respectively proceed to choose and elect one or more person or persons (as the writ shall direct) to represent the said county or city in Parliament, in the stead and room of such person or persons whose seats have become vacant as aforesaid; and said person and persons so chosen and elected, shall be duly returned as a member or members to serve in Parliament for the said county or city, and so on from time to time as any vacancy shall happen to arise during the continuance of the said Parliament.

"And whereas, enlarging the districts of the several cities and borough towns within this kingdom, would tend to render their elections of citizens and burgesses to serve in Parliament, much more free and independent:

"Be it enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that from and after the expiration or dissolution of this present Parliament, the limits or precincts of every city, borough, town, or manor, having a right to send members to Parliament, shall, for the purposes of this act only, extend, and be deemed and taken to extend, to a space or distance of four miles from the said city, borough, town, and manor, which space or distance is to be measured by a line to be drawn from some one place within the said city, borough, town or manor, as near the centre of the present site of the said city, borough, town, or manor, as conveniently as may be done, and to extend in every direction to a distance of four miles from the said place, and no further, so as thereby to make the circuit of the district round the said city, borough, town, or manor, equal to twenty-four miles in circumference or thereabouts, and which space contained within the said circuit shall be for the purposes of this act deemed and taken as the district of the said city, borough, town, or manor.

"Provided always, that where any city, borough, town, or manor, having a right to send members to serve in Parliament, shall be so situate, as that a line of four miles cannot conveniently be drawn or measured in the manner herein before directed, by reason of the vicinity of some other city, borough, town, or manor, having also a right to send members to serve in Parliament, or by reason of the proximity of the sea, then and in every such case, a certain district shall be measured from the most central place within the said city, borough, town, or manor, in such direction as can be

best and most conveniently done, and which shall be equal or as nearly as may be to a space contained within a circumference of twenty-four miles, and which space shall be marked out and allotted, as and for the district of the said city, borough, town, or manor, situate as aforesaid, so as in all cases to give to every city, borough, town, or manor, having a right to send members to Parliament, a district thereunto appertaining, equal to twenty-four miles in circumference.

"And for the better ascertaining the limits and boundaries of the several districts aforesaid, and in order to prevent all controversy relative thereto:

"Be it enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that from and after the passing of this act, the Speaker of the House of Commons shall issue his order or warrant to the sheriffs of the several counties in this kingdom, commanding the said sheriffs to trace and mark out the boundaries of the several districts which are to be allotted to each city, borough, town, or manor, lying within the said county, pursuant to the true intent and meaning of this act; and the said sheriffs shall, within three months after the receipt of the said order or warrant, fix and ascertain the boundaries of the district appertaining unto every such city, borough, town, or manor, lying within the said county, according to the directions in this act contained; and the said sheriff, for the said purpose, shall summon and impannel a jury of twelve freeholders of ten pounds freehold lying within the said county, but not in the barony in which the said city, borough, town, or manor lies, which said jury shall perambulate the said boundaries together with the said sheriff, and allot the said several districts by metes and bounds; for which end and purpose, the said sheriffs shall employ one or more skilful surveyors to attend upon the said jury, and mark out the several districts as aforesaid; and, after the said jury shall have allotted and marked out the said district, by plain and distinct metes and bounds in the manner directed by this act, the said sheriff shall make a return of the allotment of the said several districts, specifying therein the exact metes and bounds as ascertained by the said jury, and lodge the same with the clerk of the crown and hanaper on or before the twenty-fifth day of December next.

"And to the end that a full jury of freeholders may be had for the purpose aforesaid, the sheriff of the county shall issue his summons to twenty-four freeholders, of ten pounds freehold at the least within the said county (out of which, twelve shall be struck by the said sheriff) commanding them to attend him at the time and place therein-mentioned (giving fourteen days notice thereof) for the purpose of allotting the district as aforesaid, and therein specifying the name of the city, borough, town or manor, whose district is to be allotted.

"Provided always, that each jury so impannelled shall ascertain and allot the district of one such city, borough, town or manor, and no more; and if any of the freeholders shall neglect to attend on the said summons without reasonable cause of

excuse, to be allowed by the said sheriff, the said sheriff is hereby authorized to impose on the said person so absenting himself a fine of twenty pounds, which said fine shall be returned and certified into his Majesty's court of exchequer, and thereupon such process shall issue for the levying thereof as is usual in cases of fines due to His Majesty.

"And be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that each of the said twelve freeholders so impannelled as a jury shall take the oath following, which the said sheriff is hereby empowered to administer:

"I, A. B. do solemnly swear that I will, to the best of my skill and judgment, without favour or partiality to any person whatsoever, mark out and allot the district for the city or town of (here naming the city, town, or manor) pursuant to the act in that case made and provided."

"And to the end, that a proper fund may be provided for the expences attending the marking out the districts aforesaid:

"Be it hereby enacted, that the sheriff shall return to the grand jury of the said county an exact estimate of the expences attending the marking out and allotting the said district, allowing to every juror attending thereupon the sum of one pound per day, and to the surveyor or surveyors such sum as the sheriff shall think fit, not exceeding the sum of for which said sums the grand jury of the said county is authorized and required to make a presentment, to be levied in the same manner as all other presentments of grand juries are raised and levied.

"Be it further enacted, that when the district of the said city, town, borough, or manor, shall be so allotted and marked out as aforesaid, every freeholder who shall be seised of a freehold of ten pounds value within the said district, shall have a right to vote for members to serve in Parliament for the said city, borough, town, or manor, any former law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding; provided always, that the said person so claiming a right to vote at said election, shall have been seised of his freehold one whole year before the teste of the writ which issued for holding the said election, and shall have registered his freehold six months before the teste of the said writ, pursuant to the act made in the year of his present Majesty for the due registering of freeholds.

"And to the end, that no partial allotments of said districts may be made:

"Be it further enacted, that in case any three or more freeholders of ten pounds freehold lying within the said district, shall conceive themselves aggrieved by the allotments of the said district in manner aforesaid, it shall be lawful for the said freeholders to present a petition to the House of Commons, complaining of the said allotment, thereby setting forth the grounds of the said complaint, and the merits of the said petition shall be referred to the determination of a committee of fifteen members of the House of Commons, to be chosen by ballot, and struck in the same manner, and subject to the same rules, as committees are now chosen for the trial

of petitions upon controverted elections; and the said committee so chosen, shall have full power and authority to summon all persons before them, and to examine witnesses upon oath as to the matters thereby referred unto them; and the members of the said committee, as soon as they shall have been chosen as aforesaid, shall, at the table of the House of Commons, take the oath following:

"I, A. B. do solemnly swear that I will fairly and impartially try the merits of the petition now to me referred, according to the best of my skill and judgment. So help me God."

"And be it further enacted, that the said committee shall forthwith proceed to examine into the merits of said petition, and shall either annul or confirm the said allotment of the said district as to them shall seem just; which judgment of the said committee shall be final and conclusive.

"Provided always, that the said committee shall have all the powers and authorities as to the trial of the said petition, and their proceedings shall, in all cases, be governed by the same rules and regulations as are prescribed by the laws now in force for the trial of petitions upon controverted elections.

"And in case the said committee shall annul and make void the said allotment of the district aforesaid, then a new allotment shall be made of said district in the manner herein before prescribed, for which purpose the Speaker of the House of Commons shall issue his order or warrant as aforesaid to the sheriff of said county, who shall proceed to make a new allotment of the district as before prescribed.

"Be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that from and after the of no person who shall be elected and admitted to the freedom of any corporation in any city or town corporate, shall, by virtue of such election and admission, have a right to vote for members to serve in Parliament for the said city or town corporate, unless the said person shall have been seised of a freehold tenement of the value of five pounds by the year within the said city or town corporate, upon which he or his family shall have resided for one whole year before the time of such election and admission.

"Provided always, that nothing herein contained shall extend to any person or persons who is or are admitted, or who have a right to their freedom by reason of birth, marriage, or service, to any trade or calling, but that all such rights shall remain in full force as if this act had not been made.

"Be it further enacted, that every freeman or freeholder voting for a member to serve in Parliament for the said city, borough, town, or manor, shall (if required by any other person having a right to vote at said election,) take the oath following:

"Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that each and all the inhabitant or inhabitants of every city, borough, or town corporate, having a right to send members to serve in Parliament, who reside within the precincts or district of the said city, borough, or town corporate, as prescribed by this act, and who shall have exercised any of the following trades or callings for five years within the districts aforesaid, shall from and after the day of have a right to vote and be admitted to vote at the election of any representative or representatives to be chosen to represent said cities, boroughs, or towns corporate, in Parliament.

"And be it further enacted, that every person who shall be returned as a member to serve in Parliament from and after the day of shall before he be admitted to his seat in Parliament, take the oath following:

"I do solemnly swear that I have not directly or indirectly, procured my election and return to Parliament, by the means of any sum or sums of money whatsoever, or by any promise of any pecuniary reward whatsoever, and that I have not authorised any person whatsoever, to give or promise any sum of money whatsoever, for procuring me to be elected and returned a member to serve in Parliament, and that if any such promise hath been made on my behalf, I will not ratify or make good the same. So help me God."

"Provided always, that nothing in this act contained, shall extend, or in any wise be deemed or taken to extend to the cities of Waterford, Kilkenny, Limerick, Londonderry, and the towns of but that all their rights, franchises, and privileges, limits, and precincts, shall remain and continue as if this act had not been made."

Mr. Ponsonby then moved, that the bill be read a second time to-morrow.

This was opposed by Sir Hercules Langrishe. He objected to the agitation of the question, as it would only serve to disturb the tranquillity of the country. France afforded an instance of the danger of innovation. The bill, even if carried, would not satisfy; the United Irishmen would not be contented; their object was universal suffrage. The present bill would render the representation more unequal than it is at present; it would be a transfer of power, not a reform in Parliament. He moved, "*that the bill be read a second time the 1st of August.*"

This motion was supported by Mr. Barrington, Mr. Burton Conyngham, Mr. L. Fox, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell). It was opposed by Mr. Curran, Mr. Jephson, Mr. Tighe, Dr. Browne, and Sir Laurence Parsons. They contended that the danger to the country would arise from the rejection of the bill, not from its discussion. That reform was necessary could

not be denied; the wishes of the people were for reform, and the present constitution of the House was the strongest argument in favour of the measure; for it was a close borough representation.

Mr. GRATTAN said: The bill before you has been called a transfer of property. It is not so; the gentlemen who make the charge have not read the bill; it is not a transfer of the borough from A. to B. but from A. to all those who have the adjacent interests, landed or commercial, to all who have estates, freehold, or terms for a certain number of years, (for they must be included,) or have carried on a trade for a certain time within a circle of 24 miles. If any one man has all the lands and towns within that circle, he probably will influence the return; but such estates are scarcely to be found in this kingdom, and when they are found, they will have their influence under any reform, unless you choose to rob the proprietor in order to amend the representation; and, even in case of such estates, as in cases of great county interest, the return may be influenced, but it cannot be sold. This proprietory influence you may call the influence of the landlord on his tenants, but it is also the influence of the tenant on the landlord; also, instead of being as now the property of that person who is not a landlord, and whose best estate is his twelve burgesses; this boroughmonger it extinguishes and leads to a milder communication of manners, as well as diffusion of influence between landlord and tenant, with an additional temptation of residence to the former, and improvement to the latter. It is in short an open of 200 seats to property, to talents, and to both mixed, to be elected by the yeomanry and citizens.

We have in this plan committed no violence on the principles of the constitution, and scarcely any on its geography. We have added one member to the counties and to the three cities, because we think the landed interest is not proportionably represented, and the ministerial interest beyond all proportion represented; and we have extended the boundary of the borough, because we find in the old boundary nothing to represent. We have not extended the boundary to the whole of the county, because we would not extinguish or overbalance an integral part of the Parliament, — the citizens and burgesses; and we have extended the line beyond the borough, to a line of 24 miles to encompass a mass of landed interest as long as land is productive, and commercial interest, if within 24 miles any commerce shall exist. As commerce shall within that district increase and flourish, its balance on the return will increase, and there will yet remain a great

landed interest in the representation, even though commerce should within that district totally decline. Thus we have as far as is practicable provided against the effect of the fluctuation of property; we have not corrected oligarchy as was erroneously objected to us by oligarchy, but by aristocracy and democracy mixed. We have applied the principles of the English constitution to the state of Irish property, with a decisive advantage for the present, and with such growing advantages to the future, as must arise from the growth of commerce and the growing diffusion of riches. Weigh, then, the objections to the bill, and you will find they amount either to a depreciation of the principles of the British constitution in their application to Ireland, or to a demand for an Agrarian law.

I do not say that this bill, in its present shape, is perfect. On the contrary; I should wish to propose considerable alterations; the franchise should be extended to termors for years, perhaps some others, the duration of Parliament should be diminished, the powers of the corporation to make voters totally extinguished. After these amendments, I do not say the bill would be then an exact representation of the property of the country, or of the propertied part of the community; no, because that is impossible and that is unnecessary; no, but it would be a substantial representation of both; that is, it would answer all the political purposes of adequate representation; it would be *quod erat desideratum*; it would not be arithmetically equal, but it would be substantially and practically adequate; it would give to the mass of property, commercial and landed, instead of a fourth, the whole of the return of members to serve in Parliament, and with the mass of property it would give you the best chance for the mass of talents. But, says my right honourable friend*, why agitate the people now? We have not created, we have found the agitation of this subject, and therefore the question now is not whether we shall agitate or abandon this subject. And sure I am, that we should agitate the people much more by renouncing, than by pursuing their great object, — a more equal representation of the people. We should then leave them at large on this subject to their own despair, or to those desperate suggestions which every seditious bungler may propose, while the abuses of your representation, abandoned to such hands, make every quack a doctor, and every fool a philosopher. Sir, it is the excellence of our constitution that it contains in itself the seeds of its own reformation; and to this excellence I attribute its duration. Other countries

* Sir H. Langrishe.

have preserved abuses until they accumulated and were finally levelled but with the establishments themselves, by the deluge of anarchy, instead of being removed by reformation. You yourselves to a degree were sensible of this; and have made reforms in the executive and in the judicial branches, but in the representation you however have made none; and without reforms in the latter, you will have made none of any great effect in the former; for until the present representation is reformed, your bench of justice, your executive power, your house of peers, will be from time to time, as they have been, contaminated, by sacrificing the first to the application of the boroughmonger; by modelling the second merely to gratify the same boroughmonger, and by the sale of the peerage for the boroughmonger, to the disgrace of one house, and the corruption of both. So strongly am I of this opinion, that I imagine with a reform in the abuse of representation, all the other abuses would be quelled; whereas without it, the reform of the other abuses will be but plausible and palliative. But, says the right honourable baronet, is not this reform a step to a succession of innovation? He goes farther; he says, Does it not lead to a personal representation? to which I directly answer, It leads from personal representation not to it; it ascertains representation to property, and to the propertied community; and whatever force, weight, influence, or authority both possess, unites them against the attempt in favour of personal representation.

Freeholders, leaseholders, and all resident trading interests, are now in the struggle of our parliamentary constitution spectators; they would then be *parties*. They now enjoy a power of returning one-fifth of the House, and therefore are little interested for it; and they may have a speculation on the interest that might arise to them on the throwing up that fifth, and dividing the whole with the population; therefore some of them may be parties against it, but if they had the whole of the return, they would then be the proprietors, and they would defend the parliamentary constitution against innovation, with the same zeal with which the oligarchy now defends his boroughs against reformation; but with this difference, that the existing parliamentary constitution would then be defended against innovation with the strength of all the property and all the propertied public; whereas, it is now defended with the strength of about forty individuals, and about 200,000*l.* rental; that is, without the strength of population or of property: and it is a decided proof of its weakness, that the

boroughmongers could not now defend it without the influence of government; and a further proof of its weakness is the proposal of a plan of personal representation. Sir, could such a monster be offered as a proposal, that the persons who receive alms should vote the taxes, if there was not another monster much less misproportioned, but a monster notwithstanding, in the existing constitution, where a few individuals, as little the property of the country as its population, vote those taxes? It follows from what I have said, that the best method of securing the parliamentary constitution is to embody in its support the mass of property, which will be generally found to include the mass of talents; and that the worst way of securing your parliamentary constitution is to rest it on oligarchy — oligarchy! that is a bad form of government; oligarchy! that is always a weak one.

But, says the right honourable baronet, France! Take warning from France. If France is to be a lesson, take the whole of that lesson; if her frantic convention is to be a monitress against the vices of a republic, let the causes which produced that convention, be an admonition against the abuses of monarchy. France would reform nothing until abuses accumulated, and government was swept away in a deluge; until an armed force redressed the state, and then, as will be generally the case, united on becoming the government. It was not a progress from reformation to innovation, but from one modification of a military government, that is, of one anarchy, to another. *In principle*, therefore, the case of France does not apply; *in policy still* less; for sure I am, if there is an attempt to introduce the rebellious graces of a republic into these countries, the best precaution is to discountenance them by the sober attractions of a limited monarchy; and the worst precaution is to preserve all the abuses of the latter, to pre-engage men against the vices of the former.

On this principle, I conceive the enemies to the constitution are the extremes, the advocate for its abuses and the leveller of its establishments. The advocate for its abuses falsifies the origin of the Commons in order to support the defects in the representation. He states that the Commons were seldom called, and then only for subsidy, and this he calls the original purity of the English constitution. The period of its formation, as best ascertained, was the time of the Edwards; and in the reign of Edward I. there were about twenty-five Parliaments; in the reign of Edward *II.* about eleven; and in that of Edward *III.* about seventy great councils or Parliaments; and to these Parliaments you find the Commons were summoned: therefore, it is ignorant

to say that the Commons were seldom summoned, and it is no less ignorance to say they were only summoned for money; for you will, in the different Parliaments of those reigns, find the Commons occupied with the subjects of war, peace, and treaty, the regulation of the household, the regulation of the King's counsellors, the staple, the coinage, the price of provision, the conduct of ministers, and the making of laws.

And if authority was necessary to support history, you find in the reign of Richard II., the statute of heresy taken off the roll, because smuggled through Parliament without the assent of the Commons. You find Blackstone express in declaring that the principle of the constitution of Parliament as it now stands, was laid in the charter, and that it existed in fact, ever since the reign of Henry III. You will find writs extant, and the purposes for which the Commons were called, viz. the *ardua regni*, not subsidy, expressed in those writs; and you will from the whole conclude, that this advocate for abuses has traduced the inheritance of the people; and that instead of being called seldom and then only for money, the Commons were, in the purity of the constitution, an essential part of the legislation; and you will also find that they were the representative of landed and commercial property. In tracing the errors of the patron of abuses, you arrive at the truths which have confused him. He had probably heard of a general and particular Parliament, but had not learned to distinguish the purposes for which they were called; the general Parliament being called for purposes affecting the realm, the particular, which is properly called a great council, for purposes affecting the order of men only, of which that council was composed. Probably the uncertainty of the writ of summons was another cause of his confusion, but he should have understood the reason, and then he would have learned that the writ followed the property, and when the borough was decayed was not directed thereunto. Thus, in the thirty-fourth of Edward I., you find a summons to Parliament of one or two burgesses from each borough, as the boroughs should be found greater or less: why? because the representation had reference to the property and not to the name; because, though the Commons were an essential part of the Parliament, the particular borough was not an essential part of the Commons; because, in the origin of the constitution there was a principle of reform as well as of property, which principle was then very improperly exercised by act of prerogative, and which it is now very properly proposed should be exercised by act of legislation.

The advocate for abuses having falsified the origin of the Commons, proceeds to falsify their importance, and tells us that the security of the liberty of the people is placed in the aristocratic influence of their representatives, and the ignorance of his observation he applies not only to Ireland but to Great Britain. As the English Commons encreased in aristocratic influence, says the patron of abuses, their liberties were best defended. It is not so; it is almost directly the contrary. If he meant by aristocratic influence, borough influence, he talks idly; and if he means wealth, he expresses himself improperly: liberty was not best defended as the Commons became an aristocratic power, but as aristocratic wealth and feudal principality were alienated, melted, and diffused among the Commons: not as the Commons ceased to be Commons, but as great men became Commons by alienation, and small men became such by commerce, as the Commons grew in wealth the better to combat that aristocratic influence, and not as they themselves became a part of that influence and ceased to be Commons. To the aristocratic power which the patron of abuse would set up as the bulwark of freedom, must we attribute the fall of freedom and the catastrophe of kings. To this must we attribute the Barons' war and five depositions, and to the diminution of that power are we to attribute the Bill of Rights and the Revolution, both carried in the Commons against the alterations and interpolations attempted by this aristocratic interposition and influence. It is true, though the power of the baron is gone, the influence of the borough patron remains; and, therefore, though there is no civil war, there will continue to be faction. For wherever the powers of the constitution fall into the hands of an oligarchy, the Crown and the people must alternately capitulate; the one for his freedom, and the other for his prerogative; and if I were to come to any general conclusion on this part of the subject, it would be, that the disturbance of government has been the effect of this prevalence of oligarchy; and the freedom of the people the effect of its decline. Worse even than the abuses so defended, is a plan I have seen for their reformation — personal or individual representation.

The principle of such a plan is a complete, avowed, and unqualified departure from the vital and fundamental article of the British constitution in practice and in theory; and I must say, such an outset requires no small degree of mischievous and senseless temerity. With equal folly does this plan violate the dearest rights of man; for if there is one *right* of man entirely indisputable, it is that which gives to the individual in particular, and the community in general, the fruits

of his and of their industry; thus the passenger through your field, or the labourer on your farm, has no right to make rules for the management of the same; nor have the aggregate of labourers or of non-proprietors a right to make rules or ordinances for the land, farms, or trade of the community.

This reasoning applies very strongly to the case of Ireland; because it appeared on the hearth-money survey of the last year, that those who were to be exempted from the hearth-money for want of property, were more than half of our inhabitants. It was, besides, insisted on by the objectors to reform, on the principle of property, that such a principle excluded the majority; it follows that the plan which gives votes to all the inhabitants, and gives away to that majority the fruits of the industry of the community, gives away the estate of the landholder, the farm of the freeholder, the lease of the leaseholder, and the trade of the citizen, to be ordered and disposed of by a majority who are confessed to have neither estate, nor farm, nor lease, nor trade. That is the plan that robs the individual and the community of the fruits of their industry, and destroys the representation of property. Under the pretence of establishing a representation of existence, it destroys a principle which is real and sacred, to establish a conceit which is affected and nonsensical.

But it is not merely to those who have neither farm, freehold, nor trade, that this plan extends the right of voting; it gives the return of members to serve in Parliament to all the common soldiers, to the resident army, horse, foot, and dragoons; to the police; to the scavenger. It goes farther; it gives that right to all hospitals, to almsmen, to Channel-row, and every beggar man in the kingdom of Ireland. It goes farther; it gives that right to every criminal; White-Boys that break laws, and Defenders who steal arms; and would thus present you with a representation of felons as well as of paupers. To such a monstrous constitution, whose frenzy, folly, and wickedness must excite at once your scorn and horror, the objection is not merely that such persons would be represented, but the persons (who have no property in land, lease, freehold, or trade,) being confessedly the majority, it follows, under such a plan, that such persons alone would be represented, and that the land-holder, lease-holder, farmer, and tradesman, confessedly the minority, with their one vote only, (this plan allows them no more,) would not be represented at all; it follows that those who have nothing in land, lease, farm, or trade, would return the Parliament; that is, those who have nothing in the common stock would make the laws, and the men who receive alms would vote the taxes.

You held the Catholic to be a slave when his property was taxed, without his consent, by the Protestant. The plan of personal representation does away the franchise of the Catholic bill, and taxes both Protestant and Catholic without the consent of either, by introducing a new set of voters who shall outnumber both; a body who have not, with respect to you, like the Catholics, in property, a common, but have a distinct and opposite interest, and are not politically the same, but essentially different; a body who put *nothing* into the common stock, and are to take every thing out of it. Some of them are the objects of your charity, others the objects of your justice, and all of them now invited to become members of the government, — a plan which invests the beggar with the power of the state, and which robs the people of their influence in the constitution; which goes against the rights of man and the principles of the British constitution; which destroys all the counties; which takes away from every citizen and freeholder one vote by regulation, and extinguishes by the voice and votes of the multitude the effect of the other; and which by its direct and indirect operation, taken together, disfranchises all the property in the kingdom: with such electors as have none, and whose condition alone, however subdivided their multitude, would make an election a riot: with such an unqualified rout, the plan of personal representation becomes more alarming, by doubling the number of elections, and making the Parliament annual — that is, by diminishing the franchise and doubling the confusion, afterward making that confusion eternal; so that instead of 150 elections once in eight years, we should have every year 300 riots.

Suppose a potwalloping borough without even the restraint of a potwalloping qualification; suppose an election, of which Swords give you an orderly and tranquil image, multiplied into three hundred instances, and blazing out every year at the same moment in every part of the kingdom. Trade, industry, government, order, liberty, external consequence and internal repose, in short, young Ireland, what *must* be your lot? while the business of your legislation, your trade, and your agriculture stood still to give way to this universal canvas and universal disorder, to this permanent intoxication and riot.

To destroy the influence of landed property is the object of individual representation, but its immediate effect would be to extinguish the people. The rich might, for a time, make a struggle; they might in some places buy the mob, who, by such a plan, would be all electors; they might beset the hustings with their retainers, who, by such a plan, would all be

electors; or they might purchase the votes of that great body of electors introduced by such a plan into the constitution, — all the beggars in the neighbourhood! The minister, too, (for the short time such a plan suffered King or minister,) could, in the corrupt confusion of such elections, preserve some influence by the application of the treasury and the command of the army; he could have all the swords and votes of all the common soldiers. But the farmer and the citizen could have none of those advantages; and, indeed, what farmer or citizen would go to the husting of a medley of offenders met on a plan, where bayonets, bludgeons, and whiskey, elected the House of Commons? In the mean time, the respect which the landlord and candidate now pay to the farmer and to the citizen would be at an end; and instead of resorting to the farmer for his vote and interest, the 'squire would go to the farmer's dung yard and canvass the boys of his bawn, who would have more votes, though neither farm nor freehold. The consequence of the citizen would be at end also; and, instead of going to his shop to ask the tradesman for his vote, the candidate would apply to the beggar on the bridge, or the scavenger in the kennel, or to the hospitals, or Channel-row, and those places where the poor are now wisely supplied with bread instead of being intoxicated with hand-bills, offering in the place of bread, the hopes of returning the Parliament, and becoming a third constitutive part of the legislature.

Such would be the state of election under this plan of personal representation, which, from a revolution of power, would speedily lead to a revolution of property, and become a plan of plunder as well as a scene of confusion; for if you transfer the power of the state to those who have nothing in the country, they will afterward transfer the property and annex it once more to the power in their own persons. Give them your power and they will give themselves your property. Of such a representation as this plan would provide, the first ordinance would be robbery accompanied with the circumstance incidental to robbery, murder. Such we have seen in France on a similar experiment. There were two models for those who undertook to reform the legislature, — the principles of the British constitution with all its prosperity, — the confusions of the French with all its massacres. Deliberately have the authors of the plan of personal representation preferred the latter! Their plan, at another time had, been only evidence of utter incapacity; at this, and with the circumstance of its most active circulation, it is a proof of the worst intentions: their plan is an elementary French con-

stitution; as such I would resist it; as such, as long as there is spirit or common sense in the kingdom, we will all and for ever resist it; but though the perpetration of the design you may defy, yet the mischief of the attempt you must acknowledge. It has thrown back for the present the chance of any rational improvement in the representation of the people, and has betrayed a good reform to the hopes of a shabby insurrection. There are two characters equally enemies to the reform of Parliament, and equally enemies to the government, — the leveller of the constitution, and the friend of its abuses: they take different roads to arrive at the same end. The levellers propose to subvert the King and parliamentary constitution by a rank and unqualified democracy, — the friends of its abuses propose to support the King and buy the Parliament, and in the end to overset both, by a rank and an avowed corruption. They are both incendiaries; the one would destroy government to pay his court to liberty; the other would destroy liberty to pay his court to government: but the liberty of the one would be confusion, and the government of the other would be pollution. Thus these opposite and bad characters would meet at last on the ground of their common mischief, the ruins of the best regulations that ever distinguished human wisdom, those that limit the power of the crown, and those that restrain the impetuosity of the people.

Adverting to YOUR constitution with particular care, I find in its present defective state of representation, we have neither representation of property, nor of any proportion of property; it appeared that less than ninety, but, in fact, I believe about forty, individuals return a vast majority of the House of Commons. Of property it will be found that those persons who return that majority (it is I believe two-thirds), have not an annual income of 300,000*l.* while they give and grant above 3,000,000*l.*, that is, the taxes they give are ten-times, and the property they tax is infinitely greater than the property they represent. This constitution of disproportion — this representation of person, not property, of the persons of a few individuals, is less defensible when you look to its origin. I have heard of the antiquity of borough representation in Ireland — it is a gross and monstrous imposition; this borough representation is upstart, the greater part of which was created by James I. for the known and professed purpose of modelling parliament. Hear the account of that project in Ireland! Chief-baron Gilbert says, "The constitution of boroughs did not arise from burgage-tenures as in England, but from concessions from the King to

send members created in later times, when, by securing an interest in such towns, proper representatives to serve the turn of the court were sent to Parliament." In Leland, you find them described as follows: — "A number of new boroughs, most of them inconsiderable, and many too poor to afford wages to representatives, must be entirely devoted to government, and must return its creatures and dependants; such an accession of power could not fail to encourage administration to pursue the dictates of its passions and resentments." The persons returned were — whom? clerks, attornies, and servants of the Lord Deputy; there is the sacred model!

But, say gentlemen, the boroughs have in their operation done prodigies! one great operation has been to tax the country at large for places and pensions for borough representatives. See how the constitution, by borough and not representation, worked previous to the Revolution: it scarcely worked at all. Of the last century near eighty-five years at different intervals passed without a Parliament; from 1585 to 1612, that is, twenty-seven years, no Parliament; from 1615 to 1634, nineteen years, no Parliament; from 1648 to 1661, thirteen years, no Parliament; from 1666 to 1692, that is twenty-six, no Parliament. Before the Revolution it thus appears, that with the rights and the name, Ireland had not the possession of a parliamentary constitution; and it will appear, since the revolution, she had no constitutional Parliament. From 1692 to 1768, near seventy years, almost two thirds of a century, the tenure was during the life of the King; since that time of limitation of the term, there have been two reforms in the essence of Parliament, but reforms which I shall distinguish from the constitutional reform desired in the bill, by the appellation of anti-reforms. The first anti-reform procured by the treasury, was the creation of a number of new Parliamentary provisions, in the years 1769, 1770 and 1771, for the purpose of creating representatives of the minister to counteract and counterbalance the representatives of the aristocracy; this anti-reform or modelling of the legislature was emphatically described and authoritatively confessed by a memorable declaration and scandalous justification; and the government was said to have paid for defeating the aristocratic influence, a sum of half a million, — a sum which would have bought fifty boroughs to be open to the people, and which the people were declared to have paid to procure a certain number of members in Parliament to represent the minister.

The second period of anti-reform was in 1789, when the same sum was declared as likely to be expended for the same purpose, for the purpose of buying more representatives of

the then minister to counteract the remaining strength of the representatives of the aristocracy; that is, when fifteen new parliamentary provisions were created to procure fifteen new ministerial representatives. Here is the other half million; and here are two anti-reforms, which have cost the nation as much as would buy one hundred boroughs, that is, all the boroughs; which (the fifteen new court representatives of 1789, being added to those of 1769, or about that period, and to the gradual additions since) make altogether from forty to fifty new additional representatives of administration, which is a number nearly equal to all the knights of the shire.

I have heard the word innovation. Would they who exclaim thus call forty additional members to the counties innovation, and forty additional members to the ministers none? Is the extent of the principle of representation to more county members innovation, and the subversion of that principle, in the instances I speak of, none? Is a fuller and fairer representation of property, on the principles of the constitution, innovation, and a fuller representation of the treasury none? The question is not now, whether you will admit the idea of a reform of Parliament, but, having admitted and submitted to innovation in the shape of abuse, whether you will not now counteract that abuse in the shape of reformation? Gentlemen speak of a fixed constitution. Sir, these boroughs are not a fixed constitution, but floating property; a provision for younger children; a payment for debts; and a mortgage on the treasury for the family of the proprietor; the question is, then, whether a property which is now at market, shall be bought by individuals or opened to the people? Whether the minister shall, from time to time, buy such portions of your constitution as shall secure him at all times a majority against the people; or a reform shall so control that influence, as to secure to the people the chance of a majority in their own House of Parliament?

When I say this is a question, I am in error; it can be no question, or, at least, this is the only assembly in which it could be a question. Let not gentlemen complain of stirring the subject, *they* stirred, *they* decided the subject; they who negotiated the half million; they who created, in 1789, the memorable increase of court representation; they who confessed the half million; and they who devised the sale of the peerage. We are only the advocates for a reform of Parliament, but they are the evidence of its necessity; they do not draw that conclusion themselves; no, but they are the evidence that force the conclusion upon you.

Gentlemen have talked of innovation; have they considered the date of boroughs when they talk in this manner? Many of these boroughs were at first free boroughs, perhaps one-half of the whole was free by charter, and have been made close boroughs by its violation, and are in law extinct, and their members now sit in this House in face of the law of the land as well as the principles of the constitution. We moved to go last session into an examination, but gentlemen were afraid; we wish to go now into an examination, and if they will venture we have reason to think we can show you that many of those boroughs are dead in law, and their members sit here by intrusion.

We conclude this head by three observations: 1st, That in Ireland the erection of the majority of boroughs was with a view to subvert her parliamentary constitution. 2d, That the use made of those boroughs since, by the sale of peerages, and by the procuring at each general election portions of the Parliament, has tended to undermine that constitution. 3d, That a great part of those boroughs have at this moment no existence in law. We, therefore, conclude, with Locke and Bolingbroke:

"Things of this world are in so constant a flux, that nothing remains long in the same state; thus people, riches, trade, power, change their stations, flourishing mighty cities come to ruin, and prove in time neglected desolate corners; whilst other unfrequented places grow into populous countries, filled with wealth and inhabitants. But things not always changing equally, and private interest often keeping up customs and privileges when the reasons of them are ceased, it often comes to pass, that in governments where part of the legislative consists of representatives chosen by the people, that in tract of time this representation becomes very unequal and disproportionate to the reasons it was at first established upon. To what gross absurdities the following of custom, when reason has left it, may lead, we may be satisfied, when we see the bare name of a town, of which there remain not so much as the ruins, where scarce so much housing as a sheep-cot, or more inhabitants than a shepherd are to be found, sends as many representatives to the grand assembly of law-makers as a whole county, numerous in people, and powerful in riches; this strangers stand amazed at, and every one must confess needs a remedy."

Speaking of the Revolution, Lord Bolingbroke adds,

"If it had been such, with respect to the elections of members to serve in Parliament, these elections might have been drawn back to the antient principle on which they had

been established; and the tale of property which was followed antiently, and was perverted by innumerable changes that length of time produced, might have been restored; by which the communities to whom the right of electing was trusted, as well as the qualification of the electors and the elected, might have been settled in proportion to the present state of things. Such a remedy might have wrought a radical cure to the evil that threatens our constitution; whereas it is much to be apprehended, even from experience, that all others are merely palliative; and yet the palliative must be employed, no doubt, till the specific can be procured."

The question was put, that the bill be read a second time on Friday the 1st day of August next. The House divided; — Ayes 142, Noes 44; Majority against reform 98. Tellers for the Ayes, Sir H. Langrishe and Mr. Fox. For the Noes, Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. M. Jephson.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT. — LORD LIEUTENANT'S SPEECH.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES THE ADDRESS.

January 22. 1795.

PARLIAMENT met on this day, when the session was opened by the Lord-lieutenant, Earl Fitzwilliam, with the following speech from the throne.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"In obedience to His Majesty's commands, I resort to your councils, at a period which, in a peculiar manner, calls for the wisdom and energy of Parliament.

"His Majesty's determination is fixed. As long as he is supported by his faithful subjects he never will be wanting to them or to himself. His Majesty has no interest but that of his people, no views but for their happiness, no object but their general safety.

"The uniform tenor of your conduct has demonstrated that you will not only be desirous, but zealous to second and emulate the magnanimity of a sovereign formed to lead a nation that has ever been as firm to assert its liberties, as affectionately devoted to a government which maintains its own authority for the sole purpose of supporting those liberties.

"As you are thus cordially attached to that sovereign, and

to the constitution, which it is his glory to protect, I have to announce to you, with true satisfaction, what you will hear, with equal pleasure, the intended marriage of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, with the Princess Carolina Amelia Elizabeth, daughter of His Most Illustrious Highness the Duke of Brunswick and Lunenburgh, a princess of that illustrious house, to whose mild and constitutional sway these kingdoms are highly indebted for the blessings they enjoy. This marriage promises the perpetuation of the same blessings under the same house.

"I have it also in command to inform you, that His Majesty has concluded a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation with the United States of America, in which it has been His Majesty's object to remove, as far as possible, all grounds of jealousy and misunderstanding, and to improve an intercourse beneficial to both states. As soon as the ratification of this treaty shall have been exchanged, and I shall have received a copy of it, I will direct it to be laid before you, in order that you may consider whether it will be necessary that you should make any provisions for carrying into effect a treaty in which the commerce of this kingdom is so materially and extensively interested.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

"I have directed the estimates of the public service, and the state of the public accounts, to be laid before you.

"His Majesty has that assured confidence, grounded on a long and uniform experience of your loyalty and your zeal for his service and the good of your country, that I think it unnecessary to press you in any particular manner to make a provision adequate to the present awful situation of affairs.

"It is with pleasure I acquaint you, that this provision will in some degree be facilitated by the circumstance, that, during the existence of such a war as the present, the public revenue, together with the commerce of the kingdom, has kept up, and has even been augmented; advantages which are due to the care and vigilance of our sovereign, in the general protection provided by him for all his subjects.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"I earnestly recommend to you a continuance of the laudable pains you have constantly taken to cultivate all your domestic advantages in commerce, in manufacture, and in such public works as have appeared directed to promote those important objects.—These are the true foundations of all public revenue and public strength. Your endeavours have had their fruit. The great staple manufacture of this kingdom has increased beyond the most sanguine expectations; an advantage principally owing to the constant superintendence and wise provisions of the Parliament of Ireland, and next to those, to the assured liberal and most merited encouragement which it receives in the rich and extensive market of Great Britain; a circumstance tending to cement the union and to perfect the harmony which happily subsists, and I trust will subsist for ever, between the two kingdoms.

"Attached as you are to the general cause of religion, learning,

and civilization, I have to recommend to your consideration the state of education in this kingdom, which in some parts will admit of improvement, in others may require some new arrangements; considerable advantages have been already derived under the wise regulations of Parliament from the Protestant charter schools, and these will as usual claim your attention; but as these advantages have been but partial, and as circumstances have made other considerations connected with this important subject highly necessary, it is hoped that your wisdom will order every thing relating to it in the manner most beneficial, and the best adapted to the occasions of the several descriptions of men which compose His Majesty's faithful subjects in Ireland.

"We are engaged in an arduous contest; the time calls not only for great fortitude and an unusual share of public spirit, but for much constancy and perseverance. You are engaged with a power which, under the ancient forms of its internal arrangement, was always highly formidable to the neighbouring nations. Lately this power has assumed a new shape, but with the same ambition, with much more extensive and systematic designs, far more effective, and, without comparison, more dreadful, in the certain consequences of its eventual success; it threatens nothing less than the entire subversion of the liberty and independence of every state in Europe: An enemy to them all, it is actuated with a peculiar animosity against these kingdoms, not only as the natural protection of the balance of power in Europe, but also because, by the possession of a legal, humane, and rational freedom, we seem to reproach that false and spurious liberty, which in reality is an ignominious servitude, tending to extinguish all good arts, to generate nothing but impiety, crime, disorder, and ferocious manners, and to end in wretchedness and general desolation.

"To guard his people from the enterprises of this dangerous and malignant power, and for the protection of all civilised society against the inroads of anarchy, His Majesty has availed himself of every rational aid, foreign and domestic; he has called upon the skill, courage, and experience of all his subjects, wheresoever dispersed. And you must be duly sensible, in such a crisis as the present, which rarely occurs in the course of human affairs, of the advantage of thus endeavouring to profit of the united strength and zeal of every description of his subjects.

"I have to assure you of His Majesty's most cheerful concurrence in every measure which your wisdom and comprehensive patriotism shall point out for this salutary purpose.

"On my part you shall find me, from principle, and from inclination, thoroughly disposed to concur with his Majesty's paternal wishes, and with the wise measures of his Parliament. On a cordial affection to the whole of Ireland, and on a conduct suitable to that sentiment, I wish to found my own personal estimation and my reputation in the execution of the great trust committed by the most beneficent of sovereigns to my care."

Mr. GRATTAN rose to propose the address, and spoke as

follows: Sir, the speech from the throne goes to three great objects, — the preservation of Europe, the harmony of the present generation, and the education of the future. We cannot debate the causes of the war, we deliberate the present state of it — Europe's danger, and our own. When France covered more ground in Europe; when France took Brabant, conquered Flanders, invaded Holland, she made war on Ireland. You know enough of the levels of Europe to foresee that that great ocean, that inundation of barbarity, that desolation of infidelity, that dissolution of government, and that sea of arms, if it swells over the continent, must visit our coast. Do not depreciate so much your danger or pre-eminence, as to imagine you are no more concerned in the evils of the times, than to read the Gazette which relates them; nor forget that you have raised your head too high on the globe, not to encounter the storm. If the continent of Europe belongs to France, if all the coast from Holland to Brest belonged to France, this island must sink to the bottom of the ocean. You cannot divide the Western Empire; the continent to the French, and Ireland to herself. This is not like your other wars; this is not like the American war; in that war, the object was, tax the last colony; many of the best friends of this country opposed that war, but when France interposed, when the ancient enemy of these realms, and the eternal rival in all shapes, monarchical or republican, of Great Britain, the same men took a decided part against France; for it has been the long habit of this country, to consider her in every new shape, as the old enemy. Nor is this like the seven years' war; there the object was, a distant territory in another hemisphere, and with which you are not to trade; yet then you took the field, voted armies, and incurred a debt, wisely, if you mean to go on with England — idly, if you go back now. Nor is this like the Spanish convention of 1790; and yet, on the sound of that war, you voted a loan.

Nootka Sound, a strip of land, a barren island, a remote and uncultivated tract — the speculation of the produce of a waste, or the vision of a punctilio of honour, do not now, as once, kindle Europe to arms. It is Europe herself and her islands that are at stake; princes, potentates, her orders and degrees — the creature and the Creator, man and the Godhead. It follows from this, that the present object of the war is not, because it cannot be, to interfere with the internal government of France; but rather prevent her interference with every realm and government, systematic or actual, by arms, by intrigues, or by money; by land and by

sea, in consequence of her great successes, and in pursuance of her elementary decree, passed as a principle, withdrawn as an expedient, but acted on as a maxim from citizen Genet, who attempted to poison the young states and insult the old patriarch of America, to that other man who planted the tree of sedition under the hospitable roof that received him, and abused the protection of the law of nations, to excite the people of Geneva against the law of the land; from him to Brissot, whose politics, improved by his philosophy, united in a proposition to set the globe on fire; from Brissot to St. Just, who, stating a project of corrupting all the courts and countries in Europe, asserts that the plan might have been accomplished with less money and more mischief.

As little does the present state of the war attack the liberty of France. I wish she had liberty; I wish there was any thing in her internal situation that promised liberty to herself or security to Europe.

No nation understands liberty, perhaps, better than you do; did you, in your struggles, ever imagine such a species of liberty? her liberty is death, and her state, bedlam, where the sceptre is broken into ten thousand scorpions, in the hands of ten thousand maniacs, scourging one another for offences, that are only exceeded by the barbarity with which they are punished. However, that is not now the question; nor is the question on the causes of the war, but the actual state of it, — the danger of Europe, the danger of Ireland; and as formerly you struggled for the British constitution, in opposition to the claim of the British Parliament, so now you contend in conjunction with Great Britain for that constitution against France; and for that constitution with every thing beside included, you fight for your island.

I have considered you in a state of individualship: let me now consider you in a state of connection — as forming a principal part of the British empire, and as a member of a great alliance, at the head of which is Great Britain.

Behold in France a natural energy, possessed of *genius*, courage, erudition, and enthusiasm, carrying every thing to frantic excesses, subvert their ancient government — talents take possession of the throne, and, to maintain their dominion, offer all the property to all the people. The principles of such a revolution; the active nature of its framers; the natural genius of the people; the hopes of acquisition, and the love of intrigue; the doctrine they promulgate, and the alarms they give, find or make *an enemy* of the rest of Europe; — such a revolution must be *a* war. The energy of a republic; the mass of her people opposed

to the redundancy of the population of other nations, and the mass of her property opposed to the redundancy of the riches of other nations accompany her to the field.

The depreciation of their credit; the accumulation of their debt; the loss of their people; things which in ordinary estimation sink a nation, have no effect to diminish her exertion, or I know not what to call them, her agonies or her convulsion.

The throne of Spain flies before her; the petty princes of the German states disappear; the Prussian retires, and the Hollander negociates. Thus the question, instead of being one affecting her own existence, goes to the existence of Europe; she finds one empire, and one empire only, that stops her progress — Great Britain. She alone is capable to inspire the mass of the other states of Europe, and bring into action their chaos of forms without force; troops without resources, and discipline without enterprize. Against her is directed all the force of France. "The British empire, therefore, was to be humbled on the banks of the Thames, and the sea was to be eased of her fleet." Thus you see the war goes to the accomplishment of universal empire on the ruins of the empire of Great Britain; and the question before you is, what part will be taken by Ireland? The question is not, whether in every war you will take part with England, but whether there is any in which you will stand by her? for if you fail her now, she will, probably, have no other opportunity to want, nor you to desert her. Vulnerable in Flanders, vulnerable in Holland, she is mortal here. Here will be the engines of war; the arsenal of French artillery. The station of the French navy: and through this wasted and disembowcled land will be poured the fiery contents of her artillery. As the British empire must be saved on the continent, so it may be overthrown in Ireland.

The address, therefore, does not supplicate peace. On the contrary, the spirit of the nation rises as the difficulties accumulate. They who are desirous to offer peace, have no peace to offer. The first effect of your supplication would be to weaken the operation of war; and the second effect would be to postpone the prospect of peace. The signal of your desertion would introduce a new despondency into the alliance with the hopes that on disappointment and degradation the spirit would revive: it would do this under the false idea of moderating arrogance by humiliation, or the idea of giving the face of justice to what is now a war of defence; and the reality of languor and intimidation to such a war of defence as calls for all the energies of Europe to prevent it from being a war of extermination; such a proposal, if it did not produce

peace, would, on the side of the Allies, produce great despondency, and on the part of the French considerable confidence. The French would collect that they had a party here, and would judge that a French standard in Ireland must ascertain their superiority: were England to suggest peace, they might conceive it was from a sense, an erroneous sense of her interest; but were Ireland to do so, they would think it a desertion of Great Britain. Your indisposition to the war, France would construe as a disposition to the French, not only that a considerable member had withdrawn from the alliance, but that she herself had an ally here; thus such a supplication, while it threw dejection on the Allies, would impart confidence to the enemy, and such a confidence as might help to bring her to your island, and make yourselves the victim of your own measure, and the subject of her own experiment, and produce not peace, but invasion; the effect, therefore, of such a measure might be to create enemies at home, while it gave heart and confidence to your enemies abroad; such a measure would be attended with domestic ill consequences. I dare say, if there is a French party in this country, it is contemptible and inconsiderable; but it was your union and determination that made it so. If you should now weaken that firm battalion of opinion that resisted unanimously French principles, and in the disarray of your mind, let in the vagrant opinion of false philosophy and real treason, who would answer that you would not create or revive a French or a republican party? But, on the other supposition, that you induced England to capitulate, and from the despair of her connection to make peace, you then would produce such a peace as would disgrace the empire, and make yourself responsible for the degragradation, the loss of the islands, the compensation for the ships of war, the annexation of Brabant. The ascertained dishonour, and the unascertained security of such a truce would be charged, not on the retreat of the Prussians, not on the negociation of Holland, but on the last and dearest friend of the British empire, aggravating the retreat of the Prussian, and the negociation of the Dutch—the most critical and least excusable of all desertions. If, then, the advocates of the amendment for peace in the British House of Parliament, were now to vote in the Irish, they might with consistency support this address, conceiving that when England had resolved on war, it would not be extremely eligible that Ireland should resolve on peace; or that she should enfeeble the operation of war, or embitter the conditions of peace, by withdrawing her zeal, or interposing her neutrality, or suggesting her despondency, or, in the most critical of all wars,

establish a precedent, in the case of France too; of a separate interest and a critical desertion. Thus, while a supplication for peace on the part of this country might create to France a party in Ireland, it would leave Ireland no party in England. I do not recommend this conduct as matter of good faith only, but I rely on it as the best policy. Your ancestors did not see this policy. In part with England, and in part against her; at one time with Charles; at another time with the Parliament; not wholly one party, nor absolutely the other. They never escaped the adversity, nor shared the prosperity of their connection; they were the child of events, and the child of events is the fool of fortune, and with many excuses for such a conduct; but they entailed on us those sad days of degradation through a long and struggling age of —— But no matter; it remains with you to correct these errors. Remember you have taken a part already: the boldness with which you adhere to it makes such a part folly or wisdom. To be weak at any time is to be miserable; but to be weak at this time, is to be nothing. You gave to the cause your troops, but you must give your heart along with them, and promote the courage of your troops by the gallant sympathy of your councils. By opposing France, you have made a determined enemy; by leaving England, you would secure a suspicious friend. Pushed as she now is for her trident, she will never forget your cordiality or forgive your coldness. On the supposition of your coldness, she will say that in her days of triumph you talked plausibly to her — and she will as plausibly leave you, accordingly, to all the evils that are common to the empire, without the participation of its pride or its prosperity: she will leave you to a species of government and connection supported by job, when a few, affecting to monopolize the loyalty of the country, would monopolize the powers of government, and would rule you with a rod of iron. But on the supposition of your cordiality — on the supposition that the nation puts her own image on her own loyalty, and takes a leading part in cultivating British connection against French designs, then Britain must regard your people as an invaluable ally, and their free constitution as an active and vital principle of her empire. This cordiality is your dower; not liberty, for that you would not surrender; nor money, for that you do not in any considerable amount possess; not your men, numerous and brave as they have flocked to your standard; no; it is your disposition. What is that disposition? An absolute, unqualified anti-gallicism of sentiment! Your hands are valuable, but that is inestimable; and in that sentiment those hard hands bring a better dower

than the riches of the East. No heiress Ireland, but an unadorned bride! and yet, in that one marriageable sentiment, she will prove to the empire the fruitful mother of invaluable blessings. The garden of the empire is before her; but touch not the plant of Gallic growth, its fruit is death, though it is not the Tree of Knowledge.

Accordingly, you perceive His Majesty thanks you for your extraordinary efforts, for those exertions of generosity and courage which animate the allegiance, and now constitute the character of your country; but above all, he thanks you for that inestimable disposition to exercise those free and independent constitutional powers, so illustriously obtained, in support of the throne; in cultivating the connection, and in maintaining the high station you now possess in Europe, in opposition to the natural enemy of these kingdoms, and to principles incompatible with any form or system of liberty or government. But to be attached to Great Britain is of no avail, unless you are also attached to one another; external energy must arise from internal union, and, without that, your attachment to England, and your allegiance to the King, though extremely honourable, would be entirely useless.

His Majesty, therefore, in the second part of his speech, recommends national harmony; he bids perpetual peace to all your animosities; he touches with the sceptre those troubled waters which have long shattered the weary bark of your country, under her various and false pilots for ages of insane persecution and impious theology. It is a continuation of that pious and profound recommendation which enlightened the speech of 1793, when the olive descended from the throne, on the experiment of that advice, and he congratulated the liberality of Parliament: he now spreads his parental wing over all his children, discerning with parental affection and a father's eye, in the variety of their features, the fidelity of their resemblance. He, therefore, over-rules the jingling jargon which disgraces your understanding, and that poverty of pride which is vain of mutual degradation, and creates a real poverty of condition; and he calls forth all the public and productive energies of all his people, neither resting his throne on the monopoly of allegiance no more than he rested your fortunes on the monopoly of commerce. That mildness with which His Majesty governs his people, His Excellency recommends as a model which they should observe in their department to one another, certain that attachment to His Majesty never approaches the throne with so much effect or dignity as when accompanied by an attachment to themselves

and a union among one another, founded on a common interest, a free and proud condition under a reign, whose glory it has been to give to his subjects in this country, privileges and protection. In the same mildness His Excellency enters into the spirit of the legislature, in its act of liberality, and teaches you to expect, that in the administration of the government, he will second the bountiful intentions of the laws, the spirit in which they were made, and the liberality in which they were recommended. These recommendations are accompanied by a certain style of love and tone of graciousness, coming as it were from a breast too just to injure, and manners too high to insult.

The union of all the property of the country in support of the laws, and all the talents in support of the property, with measures to redress and to unite; accompanied with the graciousness of manner to the subject, that he may feel not only a privilege under the government, but a pride in the condition of being a subject. Another pledge of his allegiance is an experiment worthy of a wise government, whose primary object is your prosperity, and whose secondary object is your love — a government, looking in its arrangement of measures for the constitution, a solid strength, and for itself an honest power, to administer the country according to its confidence in pursuit of its advantages, with a spirit too high for resentment, and alike superior to plunder or proscription.

From the union of the present generation, the public care of the speech proceeds to the education of the rising generation.

A report of the committee appointed to enquire into the institution for public education was laid before government in 1790; it will be submitted to this House now. The extract I have seen, and from that extract I collect that the fund is above 40,000*l.* per annum, of which 18,000*l.* is for Protestant charter schools, in which this extract states that there are 1700 children, whose situation is by no means such as the funds would bespeak. Of this 40,000*l.* a considerable fund is for schools of royal donation, of which the extract states one only to be in a state of prosperity. Of the remainder of the 40,000*l.*, 9000*l.* is a fund of private donations; 4000*l.* a fund of Erasmus Smith, the rest principally diocesan and parish schools.

When the report shall be laid before this House, it will see how far the intention of public education has been answered, and how far the benefits arising from the funds have been adequate to the expence. Your wisdom, I make no doubt,

will administer the remedy without any obstruction from any private interest, certain that the abuses will receive no protection from the government.

On this subject it is intended that a plan should be submitted for colleges for the education of Catholic clergy, who now are excluded from the continent; and also two or more colleges, where the children of the Protestant clergy shall be in a great proportion on the foundation, and where the patronage of the minister will be less considered than that of the university; the ministers of the crown never proving their attention to letters more effectually than when they suffer the academician to enjoy the honours of his own university, and to sit, in his age, under the shade of that laurel which, in his youth, he had planted.

Of the disturbances in Meath and the borders, the speech is silent; wisely, lest it should magnify a banditti into a rebellion, implicate the lower orders in the crime of a gang of robbers, and bespeak on the part of His Majesty any thing less than a complete satisfaction in the loyalty of ALL HIS PEOPLE.

But though the mischief has not been stated, the thing has not been neglected. On the contrary, means have been taken already, and further means will be resorted to, and if the laws when put in full execution, are not sufficient, Parliament will be resorted to for power to extinguish a banditti which cannot be tolerated by any government, and must now prepare to forfeit either their lives or their practices.

There is a part of the speech of which no subject and no Irishman can speak without emotions of joy and affection, viz. the marriage of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; an event the most auspicious, whether we consider the mild government of his family, the blessings this country has derived under his father, or the qualities of the august personage himself.

Mr. Grattan then moved the address.

Mr. Duquery rose to propose an amendment. He deprecated the war, and contended that Mr. Pitt had greatly erred in refusing to treat with the French government. When Monsieur Chauvelin was in England, the two countries were, by the obstinacy of the British minister, involved in a bloody and a disastrous war, of which he could discern neither the object or the end. He concluded by moving the following amendment:

"To assure His Majesty that his faithful Commons of Ireland are steadily and sincerely attached to the safety and prosperity of the British empire; that they feel themselves inseparably united with the fate of England; and that they most humbly implore His Majesty to take the earliest opportunity of concluding a peace

with France, and not to let the existing form of government in that country be any obstacle to that great and desirable object."

Mr. George Ponsonby opposed the amendment, and maintained that Mr. Duquery should, at an earlier period, have made his objections to the war. The object of the French government was to reduce the power of Great Britain. The war must come sooner or later; and these countries were better prepared to meet it now.

The address was then agreed to. Mr. Conolly moved an address to the Lord-lieutenant, which was likewise agreed to. On the 23d the report was brought up; its import was similar to the speech from the throne. The following were the most remarkable paragraphs:

"We assure your Excellency, that we consider His Majesty's appointment of your Excellency to be our chief governor as a signal instance of His Majesty's attention to the interests, and condescension to the wishes of his people of Ireland; that we are convinced that in your Excellency, we shall always find a ready concurrence with His Majesty's paternal wishes, and with the wise measures of his Parliament, for the happiness of his subjects. That on a cordial affection to the whole of Ireland, and on a conduct suitable to that sentiment, your Excellency wishes to found your own personal estimation and your reputation in the execution of the great trust committed by the most beneficent of sovereigns to your care. On our part, your Excellency may depend upon a firm and affectionate support, prompted by inclination as much as by duty. We shall second with peculiar pleasure the measures of a chief governor, no less remarkable for his unshaken loyalty to his sovereign than for his invincible attachment to the rights and liberties of the people, and whose possessions in this country, however ample, afford a pledge much less valuable than his character for his attention to its interests.

"Attached as we are to the general cause of religion, learning, and civilization, we feel ourselves bound to return your Excellency our warmest thanks for recommending to our care the state of education in this kingdom; we feel that considerable advantages have been already derived from the Protestant charter schools, which shall, as usual, receive our attention; but as these advantages have been but partial, and as circumstances have made other considerations connected with this important subject highly necessary, your Excellency may be assured, that we shall endeavour to order every thing relating to it in the manner which shall, upon the most mature deliberation, seem most beneficial, and the best adapted to the occasions of the several descriptions of men which compose His Majesty's faithful subjects of Ireland.

"We request your Excellency to represent to His Majesty our unshaken loyalty to his royal person, family, and government, and our fixed and unalterable determination to support, to the utmost of our power, our sister country against the rancorous animosity and dangerous rivalry of her ancient enemy. Great Britain, assailed by France, may rely with confidence on the firm and affectionate support of Ireland; and we entreat your Excel-

lency to believe, that we esteem it a signal happiness to this nation, to be governed in such a crisis as the present by a nobleman whose manners are formed to conciliate, and whose councils, we trust, will be directed to unite the whole body of His Majesty's faithful subjects in the support of the honour of his crown, and the safety and prosperity of all his dominions."

To this address the Lord-lieutenant returned the following answer:

"This cordial address, justifying with such promptitude and alacrity the confidence which His Majesty reposes in the spirit and loyalty of His faithful Commons of Ireland, is of so salutary and animating a tendency, reflects such high honour on the national character, and gives so happy an earnest of the cheerfulness, vigour, and extent of the national exertion, at this ardous and trying crisis, that it calls for more than ordinary expressions of satisfaction and acknowledgment.

"Such sentiments, communicating themselves from one kingdom to the other, such conformity in attachment to the constitution, and in affection for the best and most beloved of sovereigns, a spirit so firm and persevering in the support of a cause which they consider as common to both, and a determination so fixed and unshaken to stand or fall together, must be as encouraging to the friends as formidable to the enemies of the British name and empire. Standing on this ground, we have nothing to dread. The disturbers of the peace of Europe will see that; bound indissolubly together in interests, in principles, and in affection, Great Britain and Ireland disregard their menaces, and are determined, under Providence, to check the course of their exterminating ambition.

"If any thing could be wanting to complete my satisfaction at this happy and auspicious commencement of my administration, I should find it in the flattering terms in which you express your approbation of my principles and past conduct; and in the generous confidence with which you anticipate future benefits to be derived to this kingdom, from my loyalty to my sovereign, and from my inviolable attachment to the rights and liberties of the people.

"The stake which I have in your country, you naturally conclude, ought to bind me in a peculiar manner to its interests; but such considerations are languid and cold indeed, when compared with the ardent desire I feel to recommend myself in this new connection which I have formed with you, to the approbation, the esteem and the affection of the whole of Ireland."

Mr. Grattan then presented a petition from the Roman Catholics of the city of Dublin, thanking His Majesty and the Parliament for the removal of certain disabilities in the year 1793; and stating the existence of various other restraints and penalties, by which their body was still affected, and humbly submitting their case to the consideration and wisdom of the House. The petition was received, and ordered to lie on the table.

GRANT TOWARDS MANNING THE FLEET.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES THAT 200,000*l.* BE GRANTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF RAISING MEN FOR HIS MAJESTY'S FLEET.

February 3. 1795.

MR. GRATTAN said: Sir, I should not attempt to move for a grant towards manning the fleet, if I did not know that measures were taken already for the defence of the country: forty-one thousand men for your home defence will be, by the right honourable gentleman, proposed in the committee of supply on the next Saturday, with such a train and such other incidental force as will be necessary to enable an army of forty thousand men to act against the enemy. In this forty thousand men is not included such a county force as may be judged necessary to be commissioned by His Majesty for the purpose of preserving the peace, while the troops of the line and the militia may act without diversion against the enemy. The particulars of this force, the right honourable gentleman whose department it is to state the supply, will set forth, and set forth this day, in order to give the public that satisfaction which is due to them at all times, particularly at a moment so important and critical; the expence will be considerable, but you will bear it with fortitude, and teach the people to imitate your example. How unworthy had it been if government at such a moment had chosen to expose the country to the danger of an invasion, in order to avoid the odium of expence. The government appeals to your generosity and your judgment, and above all to your spirit, which must assist the recruiting service, assist the augmentation of the militia, and preserve the peace of your country, against all kind of disturbance from at home or abroad; such spirit and such unanimity assisting the efforts of government in the defence of every thing which is dear to us, will baffle the designs of our enemies, and preserve the constitution which you adore, and the monarchy which you revere.

Mr. GRATTAN then moved, "That a sum not exceeding 200,000*l.* be granted for the purpose of raising men in this kingdom for manning the fleet."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said: that the estimates to which his right honourable friend alluded were before the House. They contained an account of the forces for the defence of the country: 20,386 regular forces, and 21,339 militia; in all, 41,725.

Mr. Duquery observed, that it would have been better if Mr. Pitt had not involved these countries in a war with France, but had left the nations of the continent to fight with one another. That Mr. Pitt had left Ireland unguarded; that he had drawn off the fleet and the troops to secure the boyish conquest of Corsica; and if any fatality should befall these islands, from Mr. Pitt's ridiculous notion of foreign conquest, that he would stand forward even singly and call for his impeachment. After some remarks from Lord Milton, Colonel Blaquiere, Mr. Tighe, and Mr. Stewart,

Mr. GRATTAN replied: the objections of the honourable member (Mr. Duquery), are so little the subject of the day, that it is only necessary to observe on two parts of his discourse. He expresses a wish that the forces of the country should contain a description of the county armament, in addition to the 41,000 men, intended to act against the enemy. Sir, such an idea has not, I imagine, escaped the consideration of government. I believe it has been considered, that the 41,000 men are to be left free without diversion, to act against an invading enemy, while the property of the country, armed and commissioned, shall preserve the peace; but as plans of that kind are not yet completed, it has been judged premature to state them. The other part of the honourable gentleman's discourse, has alluded with much point and perseverance to the person supposed to be the prime minister of England; he has named him with much frequency; and has charged on him the misfortunes of the war, and certain attacks on the constitution of Ireland. It is obvious, though painful to display the misfortunes of the war, but the honourable member must fix those misfortunes on the minister before he can justify his invective; he must trace to him the progress of the French arms; the behaviour of the Dutch, and the conduct of the Prussians. The display he has made of French power, would seem rather to acquit the minister of the reverses of the war, while it renders our unanimity and exertion indispensable, and impeaches every attempt to sow discontent and jealousy. As to the second charge, namely, attacks on the constitution of Ireland, in 1785 and 1789, the members will recollect the councils of this country were all that time exclusively entrusted to persons here, whose opinions, probably, had then too much influence on the minister of Great Britain.

Other men and other principles being now called in to His Majesty's councils; it is our duty so long as our principles are followed, to give the minister support, and, above all, to resist the idea thrown out by the honourable member of two

opposite parties, forming their separate cabinets in one and the same administration. At any time such a schism would be dangerous, but now would be destructive. The establishment of departmental cabinets in Great Britain, to which the discontented of this country might appeal, and treachery to the existing government might secretly have recourse, is so opposite to every idea of any settled or safe government, that it cannot be too speedily condemned. As long as government gives me its confidence, and supports my principles for one, I give the whole of government my feeble but entire support.

The resolution proposed by Mr. Grattan, passed without a division.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

February, 10. 1795.

ON the 9th, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell) was proceeding to announce his financial statements, when Sir Laurence Parsons rose to ask a question from the gentleman opposite; and, after expressing the highest confidence in the noble lord, (Fitzwilliam,) who was in the chief government of the country, and stating that the exigencies of the times called for great exertions and great supplies, asked whether gentlemen now in power, were determined to support consistency and carry into effect the measures they proposed when in opposition.

Mr. GRATTAN said: The honourable member has asked, whether the same principles which were formerly professed by certain gentlemen with whom I have the honour of acting, were to be the ruling principles at present in His Majesty's councils? To that I answer, *they certainly are.* The first specific measure which is intended to be entered upon, is the defence of the country, and all others have been postponed to it.

Mr. Jephson said: that he rejoiced to see Lord Fitzwilliam in administration, and the persons by whom he was assisted; they were the only persons who projected between the two countries, a connection which could be honourable, just, or permanent. These were the men who, in 1782, secured the emancipation of Ireland, and, under every discouragement since, had adhered to

their professions. Since 1782, the tried friends of Ireland, had been excluded from power; the patronage of the crown most wantonly employed in the House, not to support the empire, but to oppose the people. Necessitous and intolerant individuals had been advanced to direct the public affairs on the principle of "*divide et impera*," and hence it was, that Ireland has been a scene of distress and embarrassment. Through rancour of persecution, and excess of insult, men have been alienated from the throne; but this contagion had not spread far, and the errors of the preceding, would, he was confident, be remedied by the wisdom of the present administration.

Mr. Duquery, declared he thought it right, before he voted the money of the people, that he should know what the people were to get. Although were they even to get nothing, he would concur in prosecuting the war.

Mr. GRATTAN said: The honourable gentleman (Mr. Duquery) has expressed a determination to prosecute the war with vigour, even though nothing should be granted to the people. I should be extremely sorry to have it supposed that it was the intention of administration to grant nothing; to mention every particular bill is unusual. It would be presumptuous. Influence, however it may be possessed, ought never to be avowed by a minister in the face of Parliament. What has fallen from an honourable baronet (Sir Laurence Parsons), however, induces me to say, and I am authorized to mention it on the part of the gentleman with whom I have the honour to act, that the same principles which we professed, while in opposition, continue to govern our conduct now; and that we shall endeavour to the utmost of our power to give them effect.

The House then resolved itself into the committee of supply; and on this day, the Chancellor of the Exchequer having moved certain grants for the civil and military establishments, Sir Laurence Parsons stated he found every item in the public accounts as high as in the preceding administration, and if retrenchments were not made under the present ministers who had reprobated the prodigality of their predecessors, he would be glad to know under what administration it could be expected?

Mr. Grattan remarked, that the honourable baronet's fears for the economy of the gentlemen now in office seemed very ill founded. He then entered into a detail of the conduct of those gentlemen for some time back, and showed that already a large saving had accrued to the public from their measures. No less, for instance, than 44,000*l.* by the reduction of the pension-list, and 22,000*l.* by the decrease of the exceedings on concordatum, making in the whole a saving of 66,000*l.* per annum.

As to saving on the other grand head, the collection of the revenue, I appeal to the candour of the honourable baronet himself, and that of the public, whether it were possible, within so short a period as the present administration had yet been in office, to investigate that very complicated business in order to effect a reduction? Certainly it was not. And, therefore, though the statements laid before the House were the same as in former years, it would be highly unfair to infer that retrenchment was not intended. On the question before the House, I think that granting this sum, expressly on the ground of commutation, would prevent a precedent from being founded thereon for an increase of the civil list. What had occurred indeed in the House on the question for this grant would prevent a repetition of it.

Sir Laurence Parsons expressed himself satisfied; and the grants were then agreed to.

ROMAN CATHOLICS.

February 12, 1795.

ON a former day, Mr. Grattan and several other members had presented petitions from His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, praying for a repeal of certain disabilities under which they laboured. And upon this day (12th), Mr Grattan moved for leave to bring in a bill for the further relief of His Majesty's subjects, professing the Roman Catholic religion. He said there were before the House a great number of petitions on this subject; that it was his intention, however, to bring in the bill in the first instance, without referring those petitions to a committee. This had been the mode of proceeding in 1793; and he thought it the best to adopt now.

Dr. Duigenan and Mr. Ogle declared themselves hostile to the principle of the bill. They stated that it was introduced with too much precipitation. Sir Hercules Langrishe, and Mr. J. H. Hutchinson supported the introduction of the bill; they conceived it to be a measure which ought to have the support of every man who loved his country; and that in the present critical state of affairs, her existence alone depended on the justice of her laws and the union of her people.

Mr. GRATTAN said: Sir, in reply to what has fallen from the honourable gentleman who has spoken last (Mr. Ogle), as to my intention to subvert the constitution of this country,

I will be very plain. My opinion is, that unless you adopt this bill speedily, you so narrow the basis of the constitution, that you will have the shadow, not the substance of a constitution. I believe the honourable gentleman in what he has said, means well; but, giving him thus the praise of honest intention, I think I have a right to a similar indulgence; the honourable gentleman, I say, is not founded in attributing to me an intention to subvert the constitution; and, so far am I from shrinking from any ill-consequence that may attend this measure, that I most earnestly implore him to attribute to me all the consequences which may follow from it; but if I am to answer for the ills of this measure, I claim also to have at least a share of praise for its benefits. With respect to time, I so far agree with the honourable gentleman, that I think due opportunity should be given to the House to consider the expediency of admitting this bill, but by no means the time he asks. When introduced it ought not to be hurried, but neither ought there to be any unnecessary delay.

With respect to the remarks made by another honourable gentleman (Dr. Duigenan), I beg to say that it is unusual and unnecessary to refer the petitions to a committee. In 1793, when a bill of a similar nature to the present was introduced, the petitions from the Catholics were not referred to a committee, but the bill was introduced independent of them. I wish to follow this precedent in the present instance; and I am the less inclined to refer the petitions to a committee, because I wish to avoid giving any opportunity for invectives and aspersions with which the principle of this bill can have nothing to do. The petitions might be improperly signed; but that could not be a very material circumstance to weigh against the bill.

As to the language of the petitions, I see nothing that they contain, but a prayer from His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, praying to be admitted to the civil and military privileges of his Protestant subjects, and not at all glancing at the ecclesiastical establishments. With respect to the word "*restore*," I think it very properly used; for no man could deny that the Catholics once enjoyed those privileges; and I think it by much the safest way that they should pray rather to be *restored* to those privileges, than demand them on the ground of natural right, or even claim that these rights should be created for them. It is not my wish to accelerate this bill; but neither would I wish that it should be unnecessarily retarded.

The question was put and passed with only three dissentient voices. Leave was accordingly given to bring in the bill, and

Mr. Grattan, Mr. Knox, and Mr. Ponsonby were ordered to prepare and introduce the same.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

February 12. 1795.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell), stated that the taxes he meant to propose would amount to a small sum, as those of the last year had been so productive, that the revenue *now* was adequate to the peace establishment. He would only mention taxes to the amount of 80,000*l.*, the interest of the loan. He proposed a tax on tabacco, paper, revenue bonds, and a continuation of the tax on leather.

Mr. Duquery objected strongly to the latter, and proposed as a substitute, a tax on pensions and salaries, which, in answer to a question from Mr. Grattan as to its amount, he stated would produce 30,000*l.*, from the revenue, stamp, and post-office establishments. Mr. Duquery stated, he intended to give notice of a motion on this subject.

Mr. Ponsonby complimented Mr. Duquery upon his good intentions and his professions in support of the administration, but he conceived that he was entirely mistaken in the course he pursued, and that his speech would produce discontent instead of satisfaction.

Mr. GRATTAN said: having heard the honourable gentleman's calculation, I am clear in saying I will object to his proposal, because I am sure he cannot be in earnest. No man of common judgment could be serious in a proposal to tax officers in the revenue; for instance, those who receive not more than 40*l.* a year. Would the honourable gentleman tax poverty under the pretext of relieving it? Could he be so weak as to believe that the House would lay a tax on men whose income is scarcely sufficient to their existence? and yet such are all the lower officers in the revenue, from whose pittance the honourable gentleman would take a tenth. Could he believe that Parliament would snatch her support from the widow of the clergyman or the soldier? The gentleman resorts to the pension list; if he had adverted to the items which compose the 120,000*l.* he mentions, he would have seen that the greater part is paid to persons who are objects of compassion, and to persons who already pay a tax of 4*s.* in the pound as absentees. Let the honourable gentleman deduct these from his calculations, and what remains? He does not know! Let him deduct the

generosity of the country to the widow and her orphans, and what will he then draw from the pension list? He does not know! What then is his calculation? A fallacy! Let me put it in another light. The sum to be raised is 30,000*l.* a-year; the source from which he would draw it is the pension list, which now is 120,000*l.* but which, by the ordinary course of mortality, must, by operation of law, be reduced to 80,000*l.*: that is the fund you want to be permanent; so that what the honourable gentleman proposes is not only a fallacious, but a fugitive fund. Thus the honourable gentleman is amusing you with false calculations, while he is disseminating discontent by a declamatory speech.

I do not impute a bad intention to him; but I say his arguments deserve reprobation, since they go to create in the public mind an impracticable wish. What the honourable gentleman has advanced, is indeed of so dangerous a tendency without a possibility of doing good, that one cannot animadvert on it without honest indignation; coming too, at a time when the House, with a liberality of which there has been no former instance, is taking from the shoulders of the poor the most tyrannical tax which ever pressed it, (the hearth tax.).

The honourable gentleman tells the House he will brace the sinews of war. How will he brace them? Is it by an attempt to throw odium on the administration he professes to admire and support, and by stripping the country of its resources? Could the right honourable baronet at my left hand (Chancellor of the Exchequer) procure money for the country on the fugacious ground the honourable gentleman proposes? No, certainly. It is therefore declamatory and worse than idle for the honourable gentleman to give out a parade day for a measure which he cannot show to be useful, and which if it be useful, government will take up, as they have done their other measures, of themselves, and not from the dictates of a member professing to support, but endeavouring to embarrass.

After a few remarks from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the several grants were agreed to.

DUBLIN POLICE.

February 17. 1795.

ON the 12th Mr. Grattan brought forward the subject of the police of the city of Dublin, and said: Sir, I have presented to this House many petitions against the police establishment, praying to be relieved from the inadequacy and extravagance of that institution. Those petitions from very nearly all the parishes in this city are now on your table; and it is my intention to move for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the police law, and to establish in the room of that institution, an efficient and constitutional guard for the city. It was not necessary in order to ground this bill, that the petitions now on your table should have been presented. Had no petition come before you, I would from my own knowledge of the defects and abuses of the institution, and in compliance with the wishes of my fellow-citizens, have introduced the bill. The petitions however, coming from so large a part of the citizens, form a conclusive argument in favour of the measure. If, therefore, gentlemen please, I will move that the petitions be referred to a committee, and shall, after they have reported their opinion, move for leave to bring in the bill.

The House accordingly resolved itself into a committee on the petitions, Mr. G. Ponsonby in the chair.

The petitions being read,

Mr. Grattan moved a resolution, "That a motion should be made in the House, for leave to bring in a bill, pursuant to the prayer of the several petitions."

This resolution being agreed to, the House resumed, and Mr. Ponsonby reported from the committee.

Mr. Grattan then moved for leave to bring in a bill, for repealing so much of two acts as went to establish the police; also, to provide a proper and sufficient nightly guard for the city.

Mr. Ponsonby seconded this motion. Leave was given; and on the 16th the House resolved itself into the committee,

When Mr. Grattan said: he thought it unnecessary to enter into an enlarged detail on the inefficiency of the police establishment for the protection of the citizens, compared

with the enormous expence. The number of men required by the police act was 500; by the return on their table, the number of men actually employed appeared to be but 303. The expence annually, at the lowest reduction, was 17,000*l.* and at the most perfect state of the establishment 20,000*l.* The house tax collected by the police was 13,000*l.*, being about 1000*l.* more than the paving board, whose jurisdiction was considerably more extensive; and on this there appeared an arrear, which they could not collect, of 10,000*l.*, while that due to the paving board was little or nothing. Thus it appeared they were not only inadequate to the protection of the citizens, but to the collection of their own taxes. They were in arrear to the treasury in a sum of 16,000*l.*, which they had borrowed on their outset, under promise of re-payment, but had never repaid one shilling, though repeatedly applied to.

He concluded by moving the following resolution, "That it appears to this committee, that the protection afforded by the present police establishment of the city of Dublin, is inadequate to the expence of the same, and that a motion be made in the House for leave to bring in a bill for repealing the present acts; establishing a police for the city of Dublin; and for substituting a more effectual guard for the protection of the same."

It was agreed to *nem. con.*

The chairman then left the chair and reported forthwith, and Mr. Grattan moved for leave to bring in the bill. Leave was given, and a committee appointed to prepare the same; and on this day (the 17th), he rose to move his resolution.

He would not trouble the House, he said, by entering into a minute history of the establishment; it was sufficient to say, that after a trial of some years it had failed. The House, he said, would not be inconsistent in voting down that institution now, though they had formerly supported it; for the difference between gentlemen on that subject was not that abuses did not exist, but that the experiment had not been sufficiently long; time sufficient had now certainly been given; and he believed that every man was ready to agree that the experiment had failed. He, therefore, called on the House to come to the following resolution:

Resolved, "That the present police establishment, having, on experiment, proved inadequate for the protection of the city, and excessive in expence, ought to be put down, and an institution, establishing and regulating a parochial watch for the defence of the same, be substituted in its place."

Alderman Warren spoke in favour of the police; Sir Edward Newenham against it.

Mr. Grattan replied: that the argument of the honourable alderman acknowledged what the resolution asserted, that the police was inadequate to the protection of the city; and therefore it was, that the honourable alderman had applied to government for invalids. He had said, too, that the object of the police was rather to preserve peace by day, than the safety of the citizens by night. It was of that he complained; that the institution was calculated rather for the protection of unpopular individuals, than that of the city. It was for this that the metropolis was charged 17,000*l.* per annum. He thought that strength should be given to the magistrate to repress riot of every species, and that no degree of unpopularity could justify insurrection; but he thought also that it was a misapplication of the public money, to use it in fortifying unpopularity by day, under pretext of a nightly protection for the city.

Besides, the honourable alderman in his remark on the disturbed state of the city at the time when the police was instituted, went rather too far; in 1784 the city was indeed extremely molested by riots, but what had occasioned those riots? the question of protecting duties — by that question they were created, and with that question they died; and, therefore, to attribute the suppression of them to the police, was attributing it to too much; it was the quieting of the public mind, and not the exertion of the police, which had restored tranquillity to the city; and God forbid that the protection of the city by day, should depend upon an institution, which acknowledged itself inadequate to the protection of it by night! On the whole, then, he thought the House whether they considered the inadequacy of the institution, either by night or by day, or the enormity of its expence, would adopt the resolution.

The question was then put; and Mr. Grattan's resolution was carried without a division.

LORD FITZWILLIAM'S RECAL.

March 2. 1795.

AFTER the House of Commons had voted the supplies, the largest that were ever granted, a redress of grievances was anxiously looked for by the people; reform, the place bill, the repeal of the convention bill, and Catholic emancipation were public measures that were expected from Parliament; but, before any relief was proposed on these important questions, the recal of Lord Fitzwilliam was rumoured. Accordingly, on the 27th of February, Sir Laurence Parsons stated, that the circumstances in which the country was placed, and the doubt as to the probability of the promises of goverment being fulfilled, would induce him to propose the limitation of the money bills. On that occasion,

Mr. GRATTAN said: that as to the want of military energy in government, and their being dilatory in carrying into effect the measures which had been thought necessary for the defence of the country, he should only say, that what government could do, they had done, and what was not done, did not depend on them.

Upon this day (2d March), when Mr. Mason brought up the report from the committee of supply, Sir Laurence Parsons proposed, that the words in the money bill, "the 25th of March, 1796," be expunged, and the words, "the 25th of May, 1795," be inserted. He stated, that the grant of supplies and the redress of grievances should go hand-in-hand. The only security the country had was a short money bill; it had been tried in 1779; it had been tried in 1789; and, in both instances, had been of utility. The people had been led to expect great measures; their hopes had been raised, and now were about to be blasted. If the cabinet of Great Britain had held out an assent to the Catholic question, and had afterwards retracted, it was an insult to the nation, which the House should resent. There had been no meetings; no petitions of the Protestants against the claims of the Catholics. It would thence be inferred that their sentiments were not adverse to the emancipation, this was held out as the leading measure of administration; the responsibility bill was another; the reform bill was another. In consideration for these measures, additional taxes had been voted to the amount of 250,000*l*; but now it appeared the country had been duped, that nothing was to be done for the people. If the British minister persisted in such infatuation, discontent would be at its height, the army must be increased, and every man must have dragoons in his house. Doctor Browne said, the present crisis demanded a short money bill. Lord Fitzwilliam was a patriot Viceroy, and he was to be recalled because he came to serve the country. Mr. Duquery, and Mr.

Egan supported the motion. They asked, was Lord Fitzwilliam recalled because he had chosen able, honest, and popular men to form his cabinet, or because, he had opposed the court corruption? The shock that Lord Fitzwilliam's recal had occasioned had gone throughout the nation. Lord Fitzwilliam had been cajoled by Mr. Pitt; and the House would act right if they resented the insult offered to the country. Mr. Smith said he had voted for the supplies under the supposition of a tacit compact between the House and the Crown, that certain measures would be conceded; but the removal of the Lord-lieutenant was the signal for their abandonment; a short money bill was now the only remedy the people could have. Mr. G. Ponsonby requested the honourable baronet to withdraw his motion. The situation in which the country and the administration were placed was embarrassing; but, when the proper time arrived, he and his friends could satisfactorily explain all the circumstances. Lord Milton (secretary) strongly opposed the motion; such a measure at the present moment would throw the country into the greatest alarm. Mr. Christopher Hutchinson declared, it should have his support, were it not that an administration in which he confided had declared it would embarrass them.

The House divided on Sir Laurence Parsons's motion;—Ayes 24, Noes 146; Majority against a short money bill 122. Tellers for the Ayes, Sir Laurence Parsons and Mr. Tighe; for the Noes, Mr. Ogle and Mr. French.

Mr. Conolly then proposed three resolutions:—

"Resolved, That His Excellency the Lord-lieutenant, by his public conduct since his arrival in this kingdom, deserves the thanks of this House, and the confidence of the people.

"Resolved, That to prorogue the Parliament before those grievances of which the people complained were redressed, would be highly inexpedient.

"Resolved, That the foregoing resolutions be laid before His Majesty."

Lord Milton opposed the resolutions. In the present critical state of affairs, he conceived they were injudicious. He pressed Mr. Conolly to withdraw them. The order of the day being called for,

Mr. GRATTAN said: it was his intention to oppose the order of the day, until the resolution of his right honourable friend was disposed of; and, he was sure, there was scarcely a gentleman in that House, who would not most heartily coincide in at least the first of these resolutions. It was not necessary that he who assented to the first, must support the two others; they were different in matter, and in substance, not by any means such as hang one upon another, tending to establish a great and final conclusion; the second of the resolutions went to insure a continuance of the sitting of Parliament, which he was convinced was necessary for the public interest;

whether it was to be secured by a short money bill, or by the resolution of his right honourable friend. He, however, would wish, that this resolution was withdrawn for the present, until it should be known whether it was intended to prorogue Parliament, after the business of the Crown should be completed, and while the business of the country remained yet unfinished; — a measure which he would not hesitate to declare, whatever minister should advise would be the enemy of his country.

With respect to the first resolution, he thought it was such as there could be no possible objection to, going as it did to bestow a well-deserved tribute of gratitude to a nobleman who, though the public expectation had been very highly raised at his arrival in this kingdom, had not disappointed it; and to all whose measures, and all whose dismissals, he gave his most hearty and most cordial assent.

Mr. Conolly then withdrew the two last resolutions, and the first was unanimously agreed to. It was then resolved, "That the Speaker, with the House, should attend His Excellency with the resolution;" to which His Excellency returned the following answer.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

"It gives me infinite satisfaction to find by this unanimous resolution, that my public conduct since my arrival in this kingdom, has appeared to you to be deserving of your thanks, and to entitle me to the confidence of the people."

SPEAKER'S SPEECH.

March 24. 1795.

ON this day, the House attended the Lord-lieutenant, in the House of Peers, when the Speaker delivered the following speech, on presenting the money bills. (The supply which had been granted in the expectation that the measures so much desired by the country, would, at length, be conceded, was unusally large, and exceeded any other that had been voted on any former occasion.)

"The Commons attend your Excellency with their supplies, which go to the utmost extent of every estimate and desire laid before them by His Majesty's ministers, and are much larger than have been ever granted in any one session; but it is their determined resolution at all times to stand or fall with Britain; and that resolution is now, if possible, still more strengthened by every circumstance of foreign and internal consideration in these

eventful times. They therefore feel it their duty, their interest, and their anxious wish, to support the empire through the present unprovoked and destructive war, with all that is most dear to them, — their lives and fortunes.

"In their appropriation of these supplies they have shown their early attention to the sure and natural strength of the British empire, — her navy, by granting 200,000*l.* for procuring seamen; and they have provided for augmenting the militia, an institution which, by the indefatigable exertions both of men and officers, is the admiration, and will be the salvation of this kingdom.

"It is owing to the unexampled prosperity and growing resources of the nation that they now offer to His Majesty, without laying much additional burthen on the people, or lessening those bounties and pecuniary encouragements, under which trade and manufactures have increased and are increasing; and the same causes have allowed them, amidst these liberal supplies, to gratify His Majesty's paternal benevolence, and their own anxious feelings, by relieving all the poorer classes from the tax of hearth-money.

"Satisfied, however, that those resources and that prosperity cannot be permanent without an effectual attention to the sobriety of the people, to their morals, and peaceable subordination to the laws, they have, by an arrangement of duties, which promises also an increase of revenue, relieved the brewery from all restriction of taxes, so as to give it a decided advantage over the distillery, and thereby discourage the too frequent or immoderate use of spiritous liquors, a measure which must conduce to sobriety, tranquillity and content, and under which the people, encouraged to regular industry, and the consequent acquisition of wealth, must feel the blessings of the happy constitution under which they live, and cherish and preserve it from all change or innovation."

ADDRESS TO THE LORD-LIEUTENANT (CAMDEN).

April 13. 1795.

ON the 24th of March Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled, and the Archbishop of Armagh and Lord Chancellor Clare, were sworn in Lords Justices. On the 25th, Lord Fitzwilliam left Ireland, and was attended to the shore by the chief members of Parliament and other distinguished individuals, dressed in black, followed by a great concourse of all classes of persons. The numbers who came to offer their tribute of condolence were exceedingly great; and the regret that pervaded all ranks was almost universal; for in his departure they beheld the hopes of the nation lost, and

their just expectations fatally disappointed. On the 31st, Lord Camden arrived, and on this day (the 13th of April), Lord Cole moved a congratulatory address to the Lord-lieutenant; it was seconded by Mr. Stewart (Lord Castlereagh).

Mr. GRATTAN said: he would not now enter into a debate on this question, because the gentleman in His Excellency's confidence had not yet a seat in the House; and, he thought it would be in some measure unfit and ungenerous to state any thing in which he must be very nearly interested, at a time when he was not present. Had that right honourable gentleman been now in the House, he would have gone fully into the merits of appointing Lord Camden; he would have shown that whatever blame attaches, did not attach to the ministers of this country. When the right honourable gentleman should have taken his seat, he would then bring forward that subject; at present he should content himself with giving a single negative to the motion, not from any disinclination for His Excellency's person, having rather a respect for him, in consequence of the exalted character of his father; but, because he felt himself much more strongly inclined to condole with the country on the recal of Lord Fitzwilliam, than to congratulate her on the appointment of Lord Camden.

RECAL OF LORD FITZWILLIAM.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES FOR A COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE INTO THE STATE OF THE NATION.

April 21. 1795.

MR. GRATTAN rose and said: Sir, I wish to say a few words on a subject which very much interests this country, —the recal of Lord Fitzwilliam. I should have introduced the matter before, but I thought it would not have been proper to do so in the absence of the minister, who, from his connection with the cabinets of both countries, must be supposed to possess the best information on the subject. It had been generally and publicly rumoured that whatever might have been the cause of the premature recal of Lord Fitzwilliam; the blame of that measure would be found to attach to the administration of Ireland, not to that of Great Britain. Who the persons comprehended in the extent of the term, "administration of Ireland" are, I cannot say, but this I shall

say, that if I and the gentlemen with whom I had the honour to act at that time, were comprehended under that term, we are willing to meet the trial, and ready to refute the charge.

I shall, therefore, move for a committee to enquire into the causes of that recal, and have no hesitation to go into the enquiry forthwith; and am confident that with the assistance of other individuals of more ability than myself, I shall be able to establish a case which will fully prove that the blame of that invidious measure did not in any degree attach to them. I court the trial, and the proper mode of proceeding would be a committee to enquire into the state of the nation; in which, without interfering with the prerogative, the House would be at liberty to investigate the causes of the recal, as well as the merits of the last, and of the Westmorland administration; the measures of the one and the reforms of the other.

I understand that two causes are alleged for the recal of the late chief governor; the first was the removal of certain great officers. I beg to observe that such removal was matter of stipulation on the one side, and engagement on the other. The leading minister declared he accepted office principally with a view to reform the abuses in the government of Ireland. In stating this, I do not betray any confidence, or publish any thing which ought to be kept secret, I only repeat what had been communicated to many people, and what the parties concerned did not affect to keep secret. His Grace the Duke of Portland, had declared, that he conceived the old system of governing this country so extremely bad, that it not only injured Ireland, but endangered the empire; to reform that system was his principal motive for accepting office, and he would have come over to this country in person had he not found such a substitute in Lord Fitzwilliam, whom he prevailed on to accept the government of Ireland, and to whose honest care he entrusted the reformation of those abuses which he had declared to be absolutely necessary. He had obtained, with regard to this country, extraordinary power; the information of that extraordinary power, he communicates to his Irish friends; he consults the members of the Irish opposition touching his arrangements of men and measures; and espouses, as an essential arrangement, those principal removals which are supposed to have occasioned the recal of the deputy. An explanation and limitation of his powers did indeed afterwards take place, but no such limitation or explanation, as to defeat the stipulated measures or the stipulated removals, one only excepted, which never took place. The persons who had uniformly opposed the old system,

which was now to be reformed, were naturally and necessarily called to the councils of the new viceroy; a change of men became a necessary part of a change of measures; for it would have been egregiously absurd, that the men who had created and continued the abuses which had endangered the empire, should remain still in that power which they had abused, while the persons who had opposed the abuses should be excluded from the councils of the individual who was to correct them; the removal, therefore, of those who had constituted the old administration, could not have been in the mind of one quarter a cause of the recal, for it was an inevitable consequence of the appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam. A question now arises whether that quarter of the cabinet can, without blame, recal the viceroy for carrying into execution those specific engagements; whether they can, without blame, recal their minister of reform, for removing, according to stipulation, some of the supposed ministers of abuse, and to continue the ministers of abuse in the place of the ministers of reformation. I therefore conclude, that if the Irish removals were a ground for the viceroy's recal, blame did attach at least to one quarter of the British cabinet.

As to the other alleged causes of the recal, (for of the real cause I am ignorant); the second alleged cause is the Catholic bill. Of this, it is some what delicate to speak; because it is delicate to talk of the executive government having any influence over legislative decision. I can, however, say, constitutionally, that the idea of promoting a repeal of the penal laws against His Majesty's Catholic subjects, had been suggested by that quarter of the cabinet which was connected with Lord Fitzwilliam, and agreed to by the other; and, therefore, if promoting that repeal was the cause of recalling his lordship, the fault lies with the British cabinet, and not with the Irish administration. On that subject there had been a communication on one side, and no resistance on the other. The minister then forms a coalition, and gives great powers. The general plan of reformation was stated and agreed to, and the specific objects of it defined; the principles and declarations of a certain quarter were decided; Catholic emancipation was not only the concession of that quarter of the cabinet, but its precise engagement. My friends repeatedly declared they never would support any government that would resist that bill, and it was agreed to by that quarter with perfect concurrence; and I was informed, from persons in whom I could not but confide, that the instruction was, if the Catholics insisted on carrying forward their bill, that the government should give it a handsome support. And now a

question arises, whether any blame attaches to any quarter of the British cabinet for recalling the Irish viceroy, for having countenanced the Catholic bill?

My opinion is, that blame does attach on that account as well as on the other, to some part of the British cabinet: but a question may arise, how far that blame extends? and my opinion is that it extends to another quarter of the cabinet; and that blame belongs to both; because when that quarter gave Ireland to the other with such powers (for great they were), he caused that expectation of reformation and arrangement, which, in their disappointment, have created the present alarm. It must have been seen that when great powers to a popular connection in Ireland were confided, were diminished, and, finally, as at present, were revoked, public passions and public hopes were raised and disappointed. One party gives the powers, the other the assurance that those powers will be popularly exercised, and both agree in the particular exercise in question; and then unite to extinguish the power, and of course the expectation.

With respect to the Catholic bill, it has been in public already stated what assent that quarter gave to that measure; and it seems that it sent over to this country a viceroy with a knowledge of those intentions, for fulfilling of which that Lord-lieutenant was recalled. I should therefore say, that in my opinion blame does attach to both quarters of the British cabinet, and that one has been guilty of too much facility, and the other of too much address. I do acknowledge that blame might attach to both administrations, English and Irish; for the approbation of the former by no means acquitted the latter, provided their measures were exceptionable. I will, therefore, relate some of those measures, or the principles of those measures. First, it was an object of the late administration to reform the abuses of domestic government: they were many and dangerous; and, notwithstanding what had been said by persons obliged to the administration that took place in 1789, in its favour, I retained my opinion that the abuses were great, and demanded immediate correction. They wished to unite all ranks of men; but that was to be done by a mild government that should, in its conduct, manners, and language to the subjects in general, and the Catholics among others, afford protection, and denote respect; as a part of that plan it appeared necessary that laws restrictive on the Catholics should be repealed; and as a step necessary for the reform of abuses in the government, it seemed necessary that certain arrangements of men should take place, as well as measures. The principle of government was to unite and harmonize the people of Ireland, by removing all invidious

distinctions, and all animosity arising from religious differences. At any period this measure would have been wise and just; but it was peculiarly so at a time when the question with His Majesty's government should have been, not how many Irishmen they could bring to church, but how many they could muster under the standard of royalty and constitution.

The administration had paid attention to the poverty of the people, by plans for relieving the poor from hearth-money. They had paid attention to their morals by a plan increasing the duty on spirits; they had paid attention to their health by proposing a plan to take off all duties on beer and ale; a plan for education had been intended; a more equal trade between the two countries had not escaped their attention; an odious and expensive institution that obtained under colour of protecting the city by a bad police, was abandoned by that government, and a bill prepared for correcting the same; a responsibility had been introduced, and a bill to account for the public money by new checks, and in a constitutional manner, had been introduced by the persons connected with that government. It was also in contemplation to submit for consideration some further regulations for the better accounting for the public money, and for the better collection of the revenue. Those occupations were accompanied by great exertions for the empire: so that administration established the compatibility of the services, domestic and imperial, and made a good system of domestic government the foundation of unanimity in support of the empire. In consequence of such a conduct, a war not very fortunate had ceased to be unpopular, and levies of an extraordinary proportion were not a ground of complaint.

In the midst of all this, His Excellency is recalled, and in a manner which evinced great ingratitude to Ireland, as the recal was a shock to the passions and affections of the country, coming at a moment when she was calling forth all her strength to assist Great Britain, under the auspices of a chief governor whom she venerated; and just after her Parliament had voted the largest supply which any minister had ever called for, on the faith of those measures which His Excellency was known to have designed.

The subsequent conduct of the people of Ireland has evinced, that the recal has produced that shock on their passions which I have mentioned; the subscriptions which had been entered into, to a large amount, are withdrawn, and a universal and loud complaint followed. I will not say, that any minister can ever alienate this country from Great Britain,

but this I can safely say, that the premature recal of Lord Fitzwilliam has damped the affection of Ireland.

That recal connected with the loss of the Catholic measure, and combined with other circumstances, has procured complete unanimity against the present government; whereas the late administration, by the aid of domestic reform, had obtained complete unanimity in defence of the empire.

The British cabinet have not only dissolved the government, but they profess to dissolve it for the preservation of the empire. Thus they make domestic reformation a crime against the empire; and, in so doing, they stop the operations of government; check the recruiting service; put an end to private subscription; insult the nation, just when they had gotten the supply, and when they knew, or must have been certain, it had been voted; they convert a nation of support into a nation of remonstrance, and make unanimity in favour of government turn to unanimity against her. They do this for reasons so low, that they cannot be credited, or so rash, that they cannot be believed, without increasing that indignation which already they have excited; they interrupt the plans of defence; and they lose the warm heart of the country.

As far, therefore, as I or my friends are concerned in any part of the Irish government, we come to meet and to solicit an enquiry; and therefore I shall move, "That this House do, on this day seven-night, resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to take into consideration the state of the nation."

The motion was opposed by Mr. Cuffe, Lord Maxwell, Mr. Archdall, the Attorney-general (Mr. Wolfe), Mr. Corry, Mr. Barrington, Sir H. Cavendish, Mr. S. Moore, Mr. Pelham, Sir John Blaquiere, Mr. Ogle and Mr. D. Browne. They maintained that Lord Fitzwilliam had exceeded his instructions; that the dismissals which he made were unauthorized; and that the introduction of the Catholic question had agitated the kingdom, which, consistently with the safety of the country; it would have been impossible to grant.

Mr. Stewart (afterward Lord Castlereagh) said, that on Lord Fitzwilliam's arrival, his confidential friends had declared that no removals would take place. He had listened however to the advice of certain men, who had given him the most mistaken counsel. They were deceived if they thought that he alone was fitted to conduct a mild government; the present chief governor was fully adequate to it; the large supply had not been voted in consequence of Lord Fitzwilliam's appointment, for it was granted after his recal was generally known. In his opinion, if parliamentary reform or the repeal of the convention bill were in the contemplation of the late ministers, he rejoiced they were no longer in possession of power. The motion was supported by Doctor

Browne, Mr. Egan, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Conolly, Mr. Jephson, Mr. W. B. Ponsonby, Sir Thomas Osborne, and Sir Laurence Parsons. They contended that Lord Fitzwilliam, as well as the people of Ireland, had been deceived; the hopes of the Catholics had been excited, and were as certainly disappointed, and instead of unanimity, discontent was prevalent throughout the nation. Mr. Ponsonby asserted, that the most explicit and full powers were given to Lord Fitzwilliam, to carry every measure which was either proposed or in contemplation; none of them had been undertaken without the knowledge of the British cabinet. In his opinion, the Catholic question had nothing to do with the recal of Lord Fitzwilliam. He had set himself in opposition to the old abuses of government, he had dismissed certain officers, and then the Catholic question was used as a pretext for his removal. Mr. Ponsonby called upon the Secretary (Mr. Pelham) to deny these statements; he pledged his reputation on their veracity; but Mr. Pelham declined the challenge.

Mr. GRATTAN, in reply, said: Sir, certain doctrines have been advanced on the subject of the British cabinet, to which I cannot accede. It has been argued that the British cabinet is to govern the executive power of Ireland, that the viceroy's function was only to obey orders, and to be the English agent in the kindom of Ireland; such a doctrine is fatal to monarchy in this country; in its place it establishes the monarchy of clerks, — a government to be carried on by post, and under the dominion of spies, who are less than gentlemen, and more than ministers. It is such a base and dishonourable system that has excited the indignation of some of the Whigs in England, the Duke of Portland in particular. It is that system of national degradation and vice-regal extinction; that system where the clerks dominate and their betters obey, that has sunk a former admistration, and has excited the scorn and indignation of the country. To the returning prevalence of such a system, we must attribute in a great degree the recal of the late chief governor. The cabinet were misinformed; they heard appeals against him from the persons removed, and tried unsummoned, on the testimony of partial witnessess, the representative of the king. They did this contrary to the confidence which essentially belongs to his office, and contrary to a principle indispensable to government. It is a matter of melancholy reflection to consider how little that cabinet knows any thing relating to Ireland. Ireland is a subject it considers with a lazy contumely, and picks up here and there, by accident or design, interested and erroneous intelligence. I am well aware how much on a late occasion the friends of the last administration were grossly misrepresented to that cabinet, and how the disposition and temper of

the people in general were misstated and traduced, and how deaf the ears of that cabinet were to the representation of the viceroy, while open to the tales of the interested and discontented.

While I mention that the viceroy is the representative of the King, and not of the minister, I do acknowledge that it is necessary for the viceroy to keep up with that minister a close communication, that the two executives may co-operate; and that when the English cabinet, who advises the King, no longer co-operates with the viceroy, that it is prudent in him to withdraw. The King communicates with the viceroy through a cabinet officer. He consults with that officer who probably consults with his colleagues touching the matter of the communication; hence an interference of the British cabinet in the affairs of Ireland which will not be questioned till it is abused, and becomes domination instead of being communication. It has been said the committee can answer no purpose because it can command no documents, so that the power of this House in calling for papers is denied, at the same time that the power of the executive is sunk and degraded. I beg to remind this House, that it has a right to command all the correspondence and dispatches, and all the information imaginable. But, gentlemen say, why call for a committee? We have been alluded to as persons to whom blame attached; we desire to be questioned, and we defy our adversaries; and desire it may be remembered, that we are ready to encounter the charge, and that those who make the charge, decline the combat. It has been said, that the reform of abuses in Ireland formed no part of the ground of the coalition; I do not pretend to say what did form that ground; but I do say that one quarter of the cabinet did assert that a principal inducement to his acceptance of office was a reform in the abuses of the Irish government; that it conceived the system to be pernicious to Ireland and highly prejudicial to the empire. I say only, that one great motive to the acceptance of office was stated to be very extensive powers in Ireland; that the arrangement for which the late Lord-lieutenant was said to be dismissed, was by that quarter engaged in; and that the Catholic question received decided approbation, and, if pressed on by the Catholics, the instruction was to give it decided support. I therefore persist to respect, but must marvel much at that quarter; I acknowledge I am astonished. The House will see how very natural this proceeding is. A party connected with certain men in Ireland comes into power; they wish to advance the persons of their friends, which cannot be done without

adopting their principles; from the habits of communication those principles and ideas regarding Ireland are common to both. The Irish connection had their English friends, as averse to the abuses of government as themselves, and ready of course to adopt arrangements of men, without which it is impossible to adopt arrangements of measures. They possess, or imagine they possess, great powers regarding Ireland, and stipulate to exercise those powers in favour of the measure of their connection who are pledged to a specific catalogue of measures.

As to the Catholic question, nothing more natural than the instruction, "Do not bring forward this question, lest it should produce a Protestant fever; but if the question is pressed forward by the Catholics, allay a Catholic fever; avoid, as in 1792, the greater disease." Of this necessity, of this temper in the people, and disposition to bring forward the Catholic question, His Excellency was to be the judge. It had been hinted in some false and feeble publications, that the question was brought forward by Lord Fitzwilliam's connection; certainly not; the question could not be kept back. I appeal to the knowledge of every intelligent man in Ireland. The acceptance of office by His Grace the Duke of Portland, brought on that question. It is my opinion it would have come on without that encouragement, but that encouragement decided the minds of the Catholics; they supposed with great reason that His Grace was their friend; they knew that his connections in Ireland were so; they supposed that His Grace would consult his friends, and they understood that they had great powers; this confidence, therefore, decided the minds of the Catholics to bring on the question. With respect to the manner of bringing on the question, they might not have at that time decided, but to bring it on they were firmly resolved. The British minister, in 1792, gave hopes to the Catholics; the new colleagues, in 1794, gave hopes; and both have now united in disappointing those hopes which they both had excited. The public disappointment on this point is to be charged to them; so is the disappointment on the general state of affairs; they send over a viceroy professedly to unite and satisfy the people; he proceeds on the reform of certain abuses, and gets a great supply of money and men, and then they recal him in the occupation of his reforms. Having obtained the money, they recal their minister of reformation; because he has displaced some of the ministers of abuses. They do this with as little regard to the feelings of the country as to her interest, and they produce by this act, which they say is done for the preservation

of the empire, an unanimity against the government, after Lord Fitzwilliam produced an unanimity in its favour.

What is the effect of this on the empire, for whose preservation it was said to have taken place? They damp the recruiting service, stop subscriptions, and convert a nation of support into a nation of remonstrance. They offer this affront to the only, or almost the only nation, that stood by England; and while they are subsidising false or doubtful allies, they strike that country who has not received, but has given aid to them; and they do this in the very moment in which she makes her exertion in their favour. They excite a domestic fever at the hazard of the general interest, for no object, or for an object too despicable or too criminal to be mentioned.

An honourable member has said,—Do you think it possible that men of such character would act so? and then he mentions most respectable names; certainly I should have thought it impossible for them to do so if they had not done so. They have actually sentenced a viceroy who, by a good system of domestic government, had procured unanimity for the exertion of the empire; whereas some of them, by a course of bad domestic government, together with their late proceeding, have procured unanimity against themselves. On such an occasion, I wish most ardently to distinguish the British nation and the British administration; and that whatever indisposition their misconduct may excite, it shall be confined to them, and never damp the national affection for Great Britain, which I hope will be immortal. It is said that the people are irritated; who irritated them? the cabinet of England. Who converted national harmony into national discontent? the cabinet of England.

Gentlemen have mentioned publications, and redresses, and remonstrances, entered into by the people. I have seen some which do honour to their authors; just in their resentment; manly in their conception; and nothing less than the occasion called for. I heartily join in such remonstrances; and, with them, I reprobate that pernicious and profligate system and its abettors, which disgrace this country; and, with them, I deprecate its return.

I have not seen all the addresses and publications of the time; but I believe there never, from any description of the people, appeared a composition so blasted as that horrid declaration which we all remember, and which asserted, "That certain parliamentary provisions ought to be defended, as expedients to buy the members — political expedients, and as such to be defended." Such a declaration could

not come from the people, and was worthy the corrupt lips of a herald of profligacy.

I have had occasion to make various answers to different addresses. I remember them well; I re-assert them; if they have given offence I am ready to maintain them; I am here ready to meet enquiry; I am here to confront my enemies, and stand by my country.*

The House divided on Mr. Grattan's motion; — Ayes 48, Noes 158; Majority 110. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Jephson. Noes, Mr. Stewart (afterwards Lord Castlereagh), and Mr. Cuffe (afterwards Lord Tyrawley).

ROMAN CATHOLIC EDUCATION BILL.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES FOR A GRANT TO ESTABLISH A ROMAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE.

April 28. 1795.

ON the 23d of April leave was obtained to bring in bill for applying the sum of 10,000*l.* for establishing a college for the better education of persons professing the Roman Catholic religion. It was read a first time, and on this day (28th), it was read a second time; and Mr. GRATTAN moved that it be committed:

He took an opportunity of stating what had been the intention of Administration in procuring the grant of 10,000*l.*, part of which this bill disposed of. A Catholic college it was thought would not employ the whole of this sum, the residue it was designed to appropriate to the establishment of free schools under certain restrictions, for the purposes of national education. The object of these schools being national, they were to have been open to persons of every religious description. Each of them was to have forty free scholars, with a salary of 40*l.* per annum each. The school-master to be appointed by the university, and to be removeable by the bishop of the diocese, and his salary to be determined by the number of his pupils. The present

* This last sentence of Mr. Grattan instantaneously excited throughout both galleries, a general burst of applause. The Speaker immediately ordered the House to be cleared of strangers, and directed the officers of the House to suffer no stranger to be admitted in future, without new orders from the chair.

endowed schools it had been found, had not been at all efficient; it had been thought, therefore, that after the death of the present masters, the funds should be transferred to the support of those new schools, where they would be truly applied to the purposes for which they had been granted; until then the schools were to be supported by a grant from Parliament, which it was supposed would not be more than 2000*l.* per annum. It was his idea that a committee should be appointed to enquire into the state of national education, and that the result of the enquiry should be laid before His Excellency by address, expressing the wish of the House, that those schools should be erected. The report of the committee alluded to by the honourable gentleman (Mr. Pelham), was, indeed, very voluminous; and if the House should come to no resolution on the subject until the right honourable gentleman had time to digest that report, he was afraid they would be very dilatory indeed. He had by him, however, an abridgment of that report, by which it appeared, that the conduct of persons connected with the free schools had been very exceptionable indeed. He thought the business of correction should have been taken up long since. The plan he proposed was indeed but a partial one; it would not however take up much time. No proposition could be more certain, than that there was not at present an efficient free school in Ireland; and it was equally certain that there should be some; the 10,000*l.* granted by Parliament would not be all employed in the Catholic college, and as it was granted for the purpose of national education, he thought it ought to be applied to that purpose; he would not, however, at this time move for the committee.

A clerical error having occured in the bill, it was withdrawn; and, another of the same nature was presented on the 1st of May. It was received and read; and, on the 6th, it was moved, That the committee be empowered to receive a clause, for the purpose of applying the sum of 8000*l.* for the purposes of education. The bill was then agreed to, passed, and received the royal assent; and thus were the Roman Catholics enabled to establish, in Ireland, a college for the education of their clergy.

ROMAN CATHOLIC BILL.

MR. GRATTAN PROPOSES A BILL FOR THE RELIEF OF HIS MAJESTY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC SUBJECTS.

May 4. 1795.

ON the 12th of February Mr. Grattan obtained leave to bring in a bill for the relief of His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects. The removal of Lord Fitzwilliam occasioned some delay in its introduction; but, on the 24th of April, it was received and read the first time; and, on this day, the order for the second reading being called for, the Solicitor-general (Mr. Toler) moved, "That the bill be rejected." This motion was supported by Lord Kingsborough, Mr. Coote, Mr. Pelham, Mr. Cuffe, Colonel Blaquiere, Sir Edward Newenham, Mr. Ogle, Mr. D. Latouche, Mr. Mason, Mr. Robert Johnson, Mr. Barrington, Sir John Parnell, Doctor Duigenan, Sir John Blaquiere, and the Attorney-general (Mr. Wolfe): It was opposed by Mr. D. Browne, Mr. Maurice Fitzgerald, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Ruxton, Sir Laurence Parsons, Mr. Tighe, Mr. W. Smith, Mr. George Knox, the Secretary at War (Colonel Doyle), Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. C. Hutchinson, Mr. Osborne, Doctor Browne, Sir Thomas Osborne, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Hoare and Mr. Curran. Both parties entered at great length into the merits of the question. Those who argued against the privileges of the Catholics, advanced the Revolution in 1688; the coronation oath; the indifference of the leading Catholics to the question; the violent proceedings at their public meetings in the city; and, in addition to these, the agitated state of the country, which would render the concession of such a measure still more unadviseable. To these arguments it was replied, that the people were very naturally discontented, because they had been disappointed at the recal of Lord Fitzwilliam; that the question of emancipation was not inconsistent with the principles of the constitution, inasmuch as that constitution was obtained by Catholics; that the coronation oath was no bar to their claims, inasmuch as it was enacted before their exclusion; and that, in the present state of affairs, it was necessary to unite all classes of people against the foreign enemy.

Mr. GRATTAN said: what brings forward this bill? a right honourable gentleman interrogates. Justice! It is the progeny of the public mind; it is the birth mature, of time. Does he solicit more causes? The Irish minister who, in 1792, insulted the Catholics, and the British minister who, in 1793, encouraged them, and his new friends, who, in 1794, patronized them, and both, who in the same year consented to the Catholic emancipation, though, in 1795, they have

deserted that engagement. Does the right honourable gentleman wish to hear more causes? The defeats of these ministers, who have made it necessary to combat by the privileges of the constitution the principles of an enemy whom they cannot restrain by arms; and still more necessary in Ireland, because they have taken away her troops, her arms, and her artillery, and left her to fight the enemy by the native spirit and unanimity of her people. But we are asked, why bring on this question in war? Because you want the service of the Catholic in war, and, therefore, in that time, should give him that inducement; because, if you mean to give up the Protestant ascendancy on the peace, you had better not expose him to the provocation of the refusal in the war; because it is folly in the extreme to embrace unpopularity, when you want the people, in order to embrace the people, when you stand less in need of popularity. Besides, what security is there if this measure is postponed, that it will be conceded voluntarily? Who will answer for the honour of public men? Who will answer for their continuance?

A right honourable gentleman has advanced an argument which goes to exclude the Catholics for ever. Their emancipation, says he, cannot be agreed to without danger to the constitution of both countries. Dreadful denunciation! Eternal decree! Without danger to the constitution of both countries, does the member say? On what ground? He tells you, because if you establish their emancipation, you must repeal the oath and declaration against the Papal supremacy, the Virgin Mary, and the real presence. It seems, then, we have been in a mistake all this time, and that the present danger is not republican principles, democratic sentiments, or French opinions; it is the Pope, the Virgin Mary, and the real presence! and to guard against such influences, observing and lamenting as he does, that the Pope has lost all power, he proposes to alienate the affection of 3,000,000 of your people, and one-fourth of the empire. Thus he proposes to realise the danger which exists, in order to strengthen you against those dangers which are vanished. He seems to see danger in every thing which is safe, and safety in nothing but in that which is dangerous. The temerity of such caution, and the phrenzy of such precaution, shelter themselves under the name of revolution. It seems we are to state names against things, and sounds against principles. The Revolution was a great event, but has nothing to say to the present question. It established great principles of liberty, which did not take place in

Ireland for near one hundred years. It began by imposing on you the power of the British Parliament, and those very oaths required in the first of William, were imposed by an English act of Parliament; and before they were arguments against the liberty of the Catholics were badges of the slavery of the Protestants. But in the course of years, the Irish Protestant availed himself of the principles of the Revolution; in a course of years it is reasonable the Irish Catholic should avail himself of the same principles. That course is now completed; the leading part of the Revolution is the claim of right which is founded on the petition of right, which was declaratory of the law of England, obtained by the Catholic ancestors of the English nation; and though religion interfered in the dispute, yet religion was not, and liberty was, the essence of the Revolution. And now, when the cause of religious interference, namely, the adverse claim to the crown, is at an end, you are unwarranted in opposing the principles of the Revolution in their extent to all the Irish. But the gentleman argues the contrary; he quotes the Revolution against its own principles; he urges the Revolution as a bar to liberty.

The right honourable gentleman adds, that the Catholic exclusion is necessary for the connection as well as the constitution; and he teaches us to think that he speaks with the authority of the British cabinet. What! will they say so? will they? Will that ministry whose country has lost Holland, lost Brabant, lost a great part of Germany, lost the terror of the British name, will they reject the Catholics of Ireland? Will they, after the loss of America, with an increase of debt in the last thirty years of above 200,000,000*l.*; with a new republican empire rising upon them, dreadful from its principles, its power, its extent, and its victories, will they talk in this manner? Have they left themselves any room for internal proscription or for eternal persecution, or for theological tyranny under the mask of religion? Or have they left themselves enough of territories, or space enough in the world, to proscribe three-fourths of this island and one-fourth of the empire? To what allies and assistance have this ministry resorted, who, for the sake of the connection, would exclude the Irish Catholics? Are not their armies mostly Catholics? Is not your militia mostly Catholics? Is not a great portion of their seamen Catholics? Are not the princes with whom they are leagued Catholics? The king of Prussia is not so, nor the Dutch, I acknowledge. What Catholic prince have they not sought? What Popish potentate have they not trusted? Have they not canvassed every

Papist in Europe; and bought every pennyworth of blood, and every pound of flesh, and begged of princes to take their subsidies? And do they now cast off 3,000,000 of Irish? They think it better it seems to buy Prussian faith with English money, than Irish soldiers with Irish privileges. They think it better to neglect unanimity against France, and throw up new dykes and fortifications against the Pope and the Pretender. They see, with dismay, two or three servants of the crown dismissed; the exclusion of 3,000,000 of men they regard not, it seems; they alienate the subject to preserve the connection. At what does the English cabinet tremble? At the loss of Holland? No; they bore that well, very well. The loss of Brabant? No; they bore that well, very well. The anxious state of the West Indies? No; that too they bore very well; but when a proposal is made to give Irish subjects constitutional privileges, then fears, such as they might have felt at the event of their own operations, begin to scare the ministry of Great Britain. So trembled the Carthaginian assembly. Those great men who had the honour to preside over the disgrace of their country, had borne the loss of their armies, the loss of their elephants, the loss of their power, with much philosophy, but when something that touched their own cabal, some tax on themselves was proposed, then they also trembled. The senate of Carthage trembled: like the British ministry, they were moved by nothing, but the least of their misfortunes.

But when I suppose the British ministry really affected by fears, either for the constitution or connection, on the present question, I pay too little deference to their understanding: they are alarmed about neither, and I will prove it. Three months ago they were willing to concede this very question; their present opposition to it must, it follows, have arisen from something that has happened since, which they do not choose to discover, and not from their apprehension about the connection or the constitution. It seems it was safe for the connection and constitution in 1793 to admit the Catholics, but in 1795 fatal to both. No; a few months ago this House would have passed this bill, and the British cabinet would have consented. Now if the constitution or connection were objections, they were permanent objections, and existed when the cabinet and the Parliament were friends to the bill; and therefore whatever may be the present motives of both, the connection and constitution enter not into the consideration of either.

The right honourable gentleman having alluded to authority in England, accounts for the difficulty in Ireland; he

ascertains the seat of the disease, and the place of the impediment; and it appears, that the bar to the freedom of the Catholics of Ireland is the cabinet of Great Britain. I rejoice that the people of Ireland stand acquitted. The Protestants of Ireland, are willing; vast numbers of them have petitioned. The great cities are willing; the great mercantile interest are willing. The cabinet of England is the bar to the freedom of the Catholics; and the dispute is no longer a question between the Protestant and Catholic, but between the British minister and the Irish nation. And on this ground I do not content myself with dissenting from them, and from those who say that Catholic emancipation would be fatal to the connection; I say precisely the contrary; I say Catholic emancipation is necessary to the connection. I will add also, it has become necessary to empire; her ministers have made it so; as the bounds of the empire contract, the privilege of her constitution must be extended.

But I find that Catholic emancipation is held incompatible with our monarchy. What! His Majesty, the head of a Catholic league, the king of Corsica, the lord of Canada, the great ally of the Emperor, the grand confederate of the King of Spain, the protector of the Pope—the King of England, whose armies are Catholic, whose European connections are Catholic; are his Irish subjects the only Catholics in whom he will not confide? Has he found religion make the Emperor false, or the Prussian faithful? Such were not the sentiments of the speeches from the throne in 1793 and 1795, when His Majesty *calls on all* his subjects to defend their religion and their constitution. What religion? a religion of disabilities! What constitution? a constitution of exclusion! Am I to understand that His Majesty called forth his Catholic subjects to fight for a constitution which was to be shut against them, and for a religion which was dangerous to the King, and penal to the Catholic? No; it was not the Pope, nor yet the Pretender; it was Paine, it was the French republic, against which you called for the zeal of your people, and held out the blessings of the constitution. But now it seems, it is the Antichrist against whom you place your batteries, the Virgin and the real presence: and in that strain of grave and solemn raving, a right honourable gentleman proposes to take up arms against the grave of Popery, which is shut, and to precipitate into the gulf of republicanism, which is open: perfectly safe for the King, he and those who join him think it, to affront the Catholic subjects by gross suspicions. Others have proceeded to the grossest invectives; perfectly safe, they *think* it,

to banish them from all places at court and seats in Parliament; to tell Catholic virtue, Catholic talents, Catholic ambition, you must not serve the King; you may have property and influence, but you must not act in constituted assemblies, nor in any rank or distinction for the Crown. Perfectly safe, they think it, to establish an incompatibility between Popery and allegiance. Perfectly safe they think it to insulate the throne, and reduce the King of Ireland, like the Pope, to Protestant guards, instead of a people; and then it is proposed that those Protestant guards should monopolize all the powers of government and privileges of the constitution, as a reward for their disinterestedness. In support of such a policy, it has been advanced, in a very idle publication, that the Roman Catholics, as long as they have the feelings of men, must resist the natural propensities of the human heart, if they do not endeavour to subvert a Protestant king; but I pass that over with the scorn it deserves.

It has been also said that his Majesty's oath is a bar. Oaths are serious things. To make them political pretences is a high crime. To make an obligation, taken for the assurance of liberty, a covenant against it; to impose on conscience a breach of duty: to make the piety of the King the scourge of his people; to make the oath of the King the curse of his people, is an attempt atrocious in the extreme. Examine the argument, and you find the oath was taken three years before the exclusion of the Irish Catholics. The oath is the first of William, the tests that exclude them the third; so that His Majesty must have sworn in the strain and spirit of prophecy. Examine a little further, and you will find his Majesty swears, not in his legislative, but in his executive capacity. He swears to the laws he is to execute, not against the laws which Parliament may think proper to make. In that supposition he would, by his oath, control not himself but Parliament, and swear not to execute laws but to prevent them. Examine a little further, and you will find the words of the oath cannot support the interpretation: "I will support the true profession of the Gospel, and the Protestant religion as by law established." This is the oath. I will perpetuate civil incapacities on Catholics; this is the comment. Such comment supposes the true profession of the Gospel to stand on pains and penalties, and the Protestant religion on civil proscription. Examine the oath a little further; and, if the comment is true, the oath has been broken, by His Majesty's gracious recommendation in favour of the Catholics in 1793; broken by the grant of the elective franchise; broken by the Canada bill; broken by the Corsican constitution. Hear the speech of the viceroy of

Corsica: His Excellency having recommended to Parliament the civil and military establishment, proceeds at last to the church, and advises them to settle that establishment with his holiness the Pope. Very proper, all this, no doubt; but if the interpretation is true, what an outrageous breach all this of His Majesty's coronation oath! I should ask, whether, in the interpretation of the oath, His Majesty has consulted his Irish bishops? and yet he could have found among them men perfectly competent. I will venture to say, that the head of our clergy understands the Catholic question better than those consulted: I will add, he does not, I believe, disapprove of their emancipation, nor approve of the arguments against them. But it seems, in matters that relate to the Irish church, the Irish clergy are not to be consulted; and an English episcopacy, like an English cabinet, is to determine the destiny of Ireland. I have great respect for the learned prelates of England, particularly for one, whose exemplary virtue and apostolic character qualify him to preside over whatever is learned, pure, or holy; but in Irish affairs, in matters in which our civil as well as our religious interests are implicated, might I say, His Majesty's counsellors should be his Irish Parliament and his Irish bishops. It seems highly prejudicial to the church and the monarchy, that the argument which excludes the Catholic under pretence of strengthening both, should be attended with circumstances that bespeak the Irish hierarchy a cypher, the English hierarchy a nuisance, and represents the king a magistrate as sworn against the privileges of his people. So far am I from agreeing to such an argument, that I must here repeat what I advanced before, and say that I do not dissent but I contradict. I do not say the Catholic emancipation is compatible with the present monarchical government in Ireland, but that it is now become necessary to it; and that, as for the preservation of the connection, you must make it compatible with the privileges of three-fourths of your people; so, for the preservation of your monarchy, you make monarchy also compatible with those privileges, you must make the regal capacity of the king compatible with the civil capacity of the subject.

In the same strain of narrow argument have gentlemen introduced the church, as endangered by the emancipation of the Catholics. They propose to attaint 3,000,000 of their fellow subjects for its safety. They propose to make it the ostensible cause for incapacitating three-fourths of the island; they make the people its enemy, and then they think they have provided for its safety. They think the religious difference not sufficient; they add temporal causes — so that

the loss of their privileges is to be added to the preference of their religion; to secure to the established church Catholic hostility, they add the new and powerful motives of interest, ambition and pride, to the languid motive of religion, and in the complication of hostile passions find a security for the church. This alarm explains itself, and is acknowledged to be an apprehension for the fate of tithe. Thus the true profession of the Gospel, and the Protestant religion takes somewhat a grosser connection, and the divine strain of argument is explained into something very temporal and very mercenary. Here is a new odium, and therefore a new danger annexed to tithe. Three-fourths of your people pay the church without compensation, and therefore it is proposed they should pay it without privilege. The payment they render is made an argument against the liberty they seek. They pay the clergy the profits of their church. The clergy are desired to deprive them of the blessings of the constitution, lest they should use the power to defeat the payment — that is, the clergy are advised to return evil for good, and to justify pains and penalties by pre-supposing delinquency. But I speak not of the immorality, I rely on the impolicy of such an argument, so long as the tithe is only a temporal payment without spiritual consolation. The Catholic, like the Presbyterian, may submit; but when once the tithe of the clergy is made inseparable from the civil incapacities of the people; when, to preserve your tithe you disqualify your fellow subjects, tithe is on the brink of ruin. When the institution of tithe is made incompatible with the constitution of the land, tithe is on the brink of ruin; it is not in your piety to save it. When once it is to encounter not only the love of gain, but every other motive in the human breast, the tithe is in danger. Thus the advocates for this objection expose the church, its establishment and its income, in the front of the battle, as they before exposed the connection and the monarchy; and represent, under an affectation of zeal, the establishment of the Protestant church, like the connection and the monarchy, inconsistent with the liberties of the people.

From the church, their error proceeds to the senate, and it is urged, that Parliament will be destroyed by the admission of the Catholics; that Parliament will at last be destroyed, like man and the works of man, I do suppose. That institution, says some famous author, will perish; it will yield to time that conquers every thing, to corruption that moulders every thing. I wish to delay its dissolution, and therefore I would add to its strength by communicating its privileges; I would enlarge its circulation; I would invite property, talents,

and ambition to act here, so that the sphere of the constitution should be the region of their activity. You have no objection to poverty, to dependency, to purchase, or even to bankruptcy. Why not admit a portion of your country's strength as well as its weakness? The strength you gain is the embrace; you must strike your root to the centre, if you mean to lift your forehead to the skies. Open the doors of your House, and shut the gates of controversy, and throw on the image of discord that chain which she has thrown on your people. It seems, however, in some opinions, this is not the method to preserve Parliament; better to sell the peerage and exclude the Catholic, and so reduce the senate to a synod of the orthodox, the champions of the minister, rather than the representatives of the people. To preserve the institution of Parliament it is proposed to democratize, by exclusion, Catholic property; to democratize Catholic aristocracy; and thus mass them all in one host of ex-constitutionalists, and on that mass to pour the chalice of invective and vituperation.

You complain of their meetings, you are the cause; you send them out of doors, and when you find them in the street, you are angry. You are the founders of their Francis-street meetings; you are the authors of their convention; you are authors of the vehement language therein; it was the echo of your passion, and the reverberation of your own declamations. The Roman Catholic, far from being dangerous, has borne his testimony in favour of the institution of the Irish Parliament, for he has resolved to relinquish his emancipation rather than purchase his capacities by an union. He has said, let the Catholic be free, but if his freedom is to be bought by the extinction of the Irish Parliament, we wave the privilege, and pray for the Parliament.

I beg to recur to the four heads of objection,—the connection, the monarchy, the church, and the Parliament; and I beg leave to lay it down as absolutely and as broadly as language will permit, that these four objects are not endangered by Catholic emancipation; but, on the contrary, that they cannot be saved without it; that it is absolutely necessary, in these times, for the connection, for the monarch, for the church, and for the Parliament, that their existences shall be rendered compatible with the privileges of people. The empire and the constitution, are like the world, large enough for all their inhabitants, and all their establishments. The policy that excludes, is your ruin; the bill that harmonises, your safety. Before such a consideration, the difficulties of honourable gentlemen, the real presence, the Virgin Mary, and the Pope,

vanish. Before such a consideration, the real difficulties, the quarrel of one minister with another minister, to displace whom, the former destines 3,000,000 of men to everlasting incapacities, do not vanish, but appear in the highest degree culpable and fatal.

It has been said, that this question was forced forward by the last administration. I affirm that it was not in the power of that administration to have kept it back. The mode in which it should be brought forward was a subject in which the Catholics would have been directed by those who supported them; but the bringing it forward was, in their minds, an unalterable determination. I affirm it, their communication was touching the mode only, their determination was to bring forward the bill; which is an answer to that stuff which is written or spoken, that Earl Fitzwilliam brought forward the Catholic question. No; we found the question; and we supported it, because it ought to have been supported. It is said the Catholics have had communication with a person, as their secretary, against whom, in a late trial, some intercourse with Jackson has appeared; but he was not their secretary when he had that communication; and, I understand, on that trial it did appear as follows: — That this gentleman, among other reasons for declining to go to France, said he would thereby lose the money promised by the Catholics, by which it, appears, from this testimony, that their mind was not disposed to a French communication, but abhorrent to it. — Thus the circumstance, if relevant at all to the question, is an evidence in their favour.

Gentlemen have mentioned the conduct of the Catholics to the government. May I be permitted to mention the conduct of the government to them, and I beg leave to call that conduct the history of proscription.

In 1792, the religious war began; can we forget the attempt of government to divide the Catholic democracy from its aristocracy, and the people from their leaders, and the flock from the clergy; their attempt to use the influence of the latter to defeat the claim of the former, and to pervert religion into an instrument against liberty? Can we forget the paper war of that time carried on by government, where the scribes of the court, whose fortune was their falsehood, levelled their artillery against the people; and by paragraphs, and libels, and impudence, outraged the wounded feelings of the Catholic subject, and, fed as they were by his taxes, turned assassins of his character? Do we forget the scornful rejection of the Catholic petition, and the sad and miserable grand jury war? Do not we recollect the instructions sent from

the Castle to their friends in the counties, to pledge Protestant against Catholic, on the question of elective franchise. Do we not remember a minister presiding most improperly at one of those meetings, to inflame, mislead, and canker the mind of the Protestant? Do we forget the order in favour of the Catholics from the throne; the instant crouching to that order; and then the return of the malice of the Irish court, and the bitterness of its prosecutions; the hive swarming forth again of hireling scribblers, against the characters, and the prosecutions against the lives, of the Catholics, for having petitioned for their liberty? Do we forget these things? Where are the ears of your perjured witnesses, and the minister's little manifesto, hawked about the streets of London and Dublin, (as little to be relied on as these witnesses)? Have we not heard of the closet conversation, and the attempt to poison the mind of the King? the tampering with the corporation, and the endeavouring to exclude, by influence, those whom the government took credit for having rendered admissible by law?

And now behold the growth of the cause under this course of persecution. They began with a division among themselves, and conclude with an unanimity among themselves, and a division among you: if that can be called a division, where the Protestants of a number of the counties, of all the great cities, and all the mercantile interests, have come to petition in their favour, and when nothing prevents the success of the Catholic but the influence of the government. The youth of the kingdom, too, they who in a few years must determine this question, they have decided for the emancipation, with a liberality which is natural to youth, and a sagacity which is peculiar to years — and they will sit soon in these seats, blended with Catholics, while we, blended with Catholics, shall repose in the dust. Another age shall laugh at all this,

> "Her justice bury what your pride has planned,
> "And laughing plenty reassume the land."

In this general application for the Catholics, there has been no application against them, nor city, nor county, nor grand jury, nor corporation, has appeared against them, that of Dublin alone excepted. Thus the Catholic emancipation ceases to be a question between the Irish Protestant and Catholic, and is now a question between the ministers of another country and the people of Ireland. They advance — the Catholic description of them; they advance from the wilderness, where for an hundred years they have wandered,

and they come laden with their families and their goods, whether conducted by an invisible hand, or by a cloudy pillar, or a guardian fire, and they desire to be received into your hospitable constitution. Will the elders of the land come forth to greet them? Or will the British ministry send out their hornet to sting them back again to the desert? I mentioned that their claim was sustained by a power above; look up! Behold the balances of heaven!—pride in the scale against justice, and pride flies up and kicks the beam!

The House divided on the motion that the bill be rejected;—Ayes 155, Noes 84; Majority against the bill 71. Tellers for the Ayes, Lord Kingsborough, and Mr. Cuffe; for the noes, Mr. G. Ponsonby, Mr. Maurice Fitzgerald.

MOTION OF CENSURE ON LORD WESTMORELAND.

SIR LAURENCE PARSONS PROPOSES A RESOLUTION, CENSURING THE CONDUCT OF LORD WESTMORELAND FOR WITHDRAWING THE TROOPS FROM THE DEFENCE OF THE KINGDOM.

May 13. 1795.

SIR LAURENCE PARSONS rose in pursuance of notice. He said, the subject was of the greatest constitutional importance; namely, whether the House would suffer the laws of the land to be violated; whether a Viceroy should be permitted to exercise a dispensing power, which the King could not exercise with impunity. He stated the augmentation of the army in 1769, and the compact entered into, that 12,000 effective men were by law engaged to remain in Ireland for its defence. To render this more binding, it had been introduced into two most solemn acts, the great money bill, and the mutiny bill. The same was continued in every money bill, until the time of Lord Harcourt; when it was thought necessary to introduce a bill to justify the sending away 4000 men, of the number stipulated in the compact. Again, in the Duke of Portland's time, it was thought proper to remove part of the home troops, and it was thought necessary to procure an act of the legislature to justify the measure; but in the month of July 1794 it appeared, from the monthly returns, that there were only 7000 troops in the country: the moment at which this deficiency was made was most critical; for if Lord Howe had been defeated, Ireland would have been the object of the French force. The country was defrauded in the quality as well as in the quantity of troops. The consequences would prove dangerous if such a violation of law was left unpunished. He

therefore moved the following resolution: "Resolved, that John, Earl of Westmoreland, by authorizing such a number of regular troops to be sent out of this country, as left the remainder considerably less than the number appointed by law for the defence thereof, has been guilty of a violation of the compact entered into with the Crown, and of dispensing with the law of the land."

The motion was opposed by Sir John Blaquiere, Sir Hercules Langrishe (who moved the question of adjournment), Mr. Marcus Beresford, Sir Henry Cavendish, Colonel Blaquiere, Colonel Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington), the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell), Mr. Barrington, Mr. Archdall, Mr. Ogle, and the Solicitor-general (Mr. Toler). It was supported by Mr. Conolly, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Tighe, Mr. Vandeleur, Doctor Browne, Mr. Curran, Mr. Hoare, Mr. W. Ponsonby, and Mr. Egan.

Mr. GRATTAN observed: that the question was not, whether Lord Westmoreland had dispensed with acts of Parliament, but, being by papers on your table convicted of having exercised a dispensing power, the question was, whether the House should proceed to impeach him. I am sure you ought. Nothing can be so evident as the law, except it be a breach of it. The King, in 1769, sent a message to this House, that 12,000 men were necessary to be kept within the kingdom of Ireland for its defence at all times, save only invasion or rebellion in Great Britain. His message is reduced in the committee of supply into the following resolution: "That 12,000 men are necessary for the defence of the kingdom. That to enable His Majesty to carry into execution his determined resolution, signified by the Lord-lieutenant, to keep within this kingdom 12,000 men at all times for the necessary defence of the same, rebellion or invasion in Great Britain excepted, it is necessary to augment the army 3,000 men." Thus the King's promise is made matter of record, and of covenant; and the additional force and the supply granted on the condition of his fulfilling his part of the covenant so recorded. This covenant is then made matter of law, and reduced into provisions in the money bill, which provisions run nearly as follows: they recite the sense of the legislature, that 12,000 men are necessary to be kept within this country for its defence, and grant the additional 3,000 men to secure the presence of the 12,000 men; they then recite the King's promise and determined resolution, to keep at all times, save the two excepted cases, 12,000 men within the kingdom for its defence, and then grant him the supply for that purpose, as well as the other purposes of government. The practice has been accordingly; and in 1775 and 1782, when

that portion of the troops were wanted abroad, the government applied and obtained an act of Parliament. This provision is always a provision in the mutiny bill, and continues every year, repeated in the committee of supply; repeated in the money bill; and repeated in the mutiny bill. It follows, that by the laws of Ireland, no Lord-lieutenant can remove the troops out of Ireland, so as to diminish the number below the complement of 12,000. Now, by the papers on the table, namely, the army returns, which are complete evidence, it appears Lord Westmoreland did reduce your army in the months of June, August, September, October, and November, to 8,000, and in some of those months to 6,000. It follows, that the Earl of Westmoreland has dispensed with the law of Ireland. It follows, that the Earl of Westmoreland has offended against the declaration of rights, and has violated the principles of the Revolution; he has committed an act for which James II. was deposed, and when he was on the throne as viceroy, was a greater offender against the law than any ordinary delinquent; the motion is not so much to try his offence as to proceed on his conviction. We heard the other day the Revolution set up against the Catholics, most improperly and fictitiously; we now set up most necessarily and properly, the Revolution against the the viceroy, whose advocates have set up the Revolution against the Catholics, and the dispensing power against the Revolution.

It seems the Marquis of Buckingham may negociate the sale of peerages, and break the law with impunity. It seems his successor Lord Westmoreland may remove the troops, and break the law with impunity, and that Ireland under the system of the British cabinet, pays 20,000*l.* a year to her governors for breaking her laws; and this is the system which is to put anarchy to the blush! Lord Westmoreland's friends have said in the debate that he only obeyed his orders; that is, his friends say in other words that he was not a viceroy, but a perfect nothing. But such an excuse is one which we must not receive, as long as any man shall be placed in the situation of a Lord-lieutenant or governor of Ireland, so long, in supposition of law, is he an accountable officer, a self-agent, answerable to Parliament for misconduct, violation, delinquencies, of any and of every sort. Were this argument true, it would seem that the English court was an asylum for Irish culprits; a bar to the privileges of our Catholics; and a protection to the breakers of our law. If such an offence as this is suffered to be passed over, how can any minister talk again of the Revo-

lution, or of the lawlessness of the people of Ireland, when the chief magistrate himself, namely, the Lord-lieutenant, is the greatest offender against law, and a recorded violator of the principles of the Revolution? A convicted offender breaks the King's covenant! violates the declaration of right! exercises a dispensing power, which, when exercised by a King, was the attainder of the crown! Under these circumstances, how can we avoid proceeding against Lord Westmoreland? How can we otherwise dispose of him? Here are the laws which contain the covenant, and here are the army returns which contain the breach of it. Can we connive with Lord Westmoreland, and combine and confederate with him against the law? against the Revolution? against the declaration of rights? against the maxims which placed His Majesty's family on the throne? Will you suffer a chief governor thus convicted to escape? Do the principles of the Revolution exist in Ireland? May a viceroy with impunity dispense with an act of Parliament, in Ireland? The King certainly cannot do so in England. Let us know the nature of our government, of our practical government, and the reality of those blessings which we are told we enjoy under our most happy constitution, which I admit to be most excellent, and therefore would proceed against a viceroy above law? If not, proceed against Lord Westmoreland, for he has broken the law. If Lord Westmoreland is not an offender, James II. was innocent. If an Irish viceroy may with impunity dispense with an act of Parliament, an act, do I say, — a host of them; if this House, knowing this, with the evidence of his guilt staring you in the face, — why then do we speak of the Revolution, or of that much injured prince James II., who did not it seems know how to abdicate. Much injured house of Stuart! not in my opinion, because I would proceed against the viceroy that trod in their foot-steps; but much injured in the opinion of those, who approve of its pernicious principles and practices restored in the government of Ireland, in the person of that viceroy, whose conduct calls so loud for impeachment. But, say gentlemen, you have not before you the whole of the case: So far as is necessary to prove the exercise of a dispensing power, and to impeach Lord Westmoreland, the evidence is complete: As far as is necessary to give complete knowledge of the misconduct of his government, the evidence is not complete: On examination you will find, that, small as the force is, which appears on your paper, it is greater than the effective force that could have been brought to act. Lord Westmoreland, it is notorious, left you at a

certain time, with scarce any army whatsoever; he sent away almost all your artillery men, he left you without arms; and, as far as depended on the conduct of the chief governor, he abdicated Ireland to France; had France made a descent, such was the misconduct of that viceroy, she had found Ireland, through his misconduct, without army, without arms, and without artillery. This is the second instance of a war, in which the ministers of the crown have taken out of the kingdom its necessary defence, and have left her naked in wars in which they had involved her. The first was the removal of the troops by act of Parliament, between 1776 and 1779. The second was the removal of the troops, in the present instance, without act of Parliament, and against act of Parliament. Perhaps, gentlemen, on a still further examination, would find that the exercise of a dispensing power, and the dereliction of the country to France by the Earl of Westmoreland, were not the only charges against government; but that the brokerage in the management of the army; the many foul practices, and the shocking system of jobbing and of traffic, are to be added to other considerations, to whom the crime belongs. How far such practices extend, I cannot presume to ascertain, but I must say that it is necessary for the credit of Lord Westmoreland, that he should acquit himself of those practices which did take place under his government, and which though less penal than the dispensing power in point of law, yet in in common opinion are not less reprehensible, or more dishonourable. A member suggests a defence — it is an extraordinary one; his defence for removing the troops is the most excellent substitute for the defence of the kingdom — the new levies! But, Sir, these new levies come not within the letter, as little within the meaning of the act of Parliament; they were not in your pay, and therefore can be no part of the 12,000 men covenanted in the committee of supply, or in the money bill; they are not any part of your establishment; they were entirely incomplete; they were not armed; and instead of being raised to be kept within the country for its defence, they were levied to be sent immediately out of it; there the suggestion of such an argument, therefore, is the suggestion of an evasion, not of a defence; it is the suggestion of a trick, of an impostorship, of a fraud; it is not a bad defence, but a scandalous prevarication, a sort of clerk-like dexterity; but so clumsy, so miserable, and so glaring, that it does not keep within the letter of the act, whose object it professes to defraud, and of whose provisions it professes to cheat the public.

It is, therefore, not an evasion of an act, but an attempt to invade it, an unfortunate conceit, and an abortive essay to get out of provisions of law by duplicity and trick, and such a suggestion and piece of craft it is, as would render it impossible hereafter for the people to enter into any covenant with the King, or to hope to bind His Majesty by an act of Parliament. It tends, therefore, to put an end to all dealing with the Crown, and, therefore, for its mischief to the government, as to the people, deserves the scorn which it has received so abundantly. The gentleman who advances this argument said, that no government had kept up precisely within the kingdom, at all times, the 12,000 men; therefore, says he, every government has dispensed with the law. This is an observation made by a gentleman who has been, if not in the service of the very government, at least in every government train. What! because you cannot make 12,000 effective men on paper, turn out 12,000 effective men in their shoes. They need not be more than 8,000; not be more than 7,000; not more than 6,000; they need not be any thing. And on two such doctrines is the dispensing power in Ireland defended. But we have understated Lord Westmoreland's offence, when we said he was bound to keep 12,000 men in the kingdom. He was in fact bound to keep 17,000 men. He got 5,000 additional in 1793, for the additional defence of the kingdom; so are the words of the act. In addition to the 12,000, the act says, it may be necessary, in the present situation of affairs, to keep 5,000 more for the defence of the kingdom. Such has been your providence, such the effect of it! Ireland, say gentlemen, was preserved in Germany. America was said to have been conquered in Germany, but it was when France was beaten in Germany; but in the present war, England did not think herself defended in Germany the last year, for she was raising troops of every description for her defence; while the Irish viceroy was robbing Ireland, against law, of the troops actually raised for your defence.

Gentlemen have said, that the army returns do not include the commissioned and non-commissioned, nor the invalids. The answer is, they include both. [See the returns.] Gentlemen have shown a surprise, that a member who was appointed a militia colonel by Lord Westmoreland, should take steps against him for breaking the law. His situation in the country commanded the appointment; the same situation and his duty demanded penal proceedings. I give it my entire consent. I must observe, it is a striking circumstance,

that in a debate where the conduct of Lord Westmoreland towards the Irish army, has been so publicly and so loudly arraigned, no one veteran of the army, nor any old officer, has ventured to defend him; they are men of honour. I must also observe, that the House on both sides acknowledge his guilt; for, instead of putting a negative on the resolution, they move the order of the day; so that the public is to collect that the House acknowledges the offence, though they wish to save the offender.

The House divided on the question of adjournment; — Ayes 83, Noes 23; Majority against Sir Laurence Parsons' motion 60. Tellers for the Ayes, Sir John Blaquiere and Mr. Barrington; for the Noes, Sir Laurence Parsons, and Mr. Tighe.

MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.—ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES AN AMENDMENT TO THE ADDRESS.

January 21. 1796.

ON this day the House met pursuant to prorogation, when the session was opened by the Lord-lieutenant, with the following speech:

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"I have received His Majesty's commands to meet you in Parliament.

"It gives me the most sincere satisfaction to be authorized to inform you, that notwithstanding the advantages which the enemy possessed at the commencement of the last year, and the successes which attended their operations in the former parts of the campaign, the general situation of affairs is on the whole most essentially improved.

"The continued and brilliant successes of the Austriam armies upon the Rhine, the important capture of the Cape of Good Hope and Trincomalee by his Majesty's forces, and the decided and confirmed superiority of his fleets, are circumstances of the utmost importance to the common cause; and their effect is strengthened by the internal distresses, the ruined commerce, and financial embarrassments of the enemy.

"The crisis lately depending in France has led to an order of things in that country, such as will induce His Majesty to meet any disposition to negociation on the part of the enemy, with an

earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect, and to conclude a treaty of general peace when it may be effected on just and suitable terms for himself and his allies.

"The treaty of commerce between his Majesty and the United States of America having been mutually ratified, I have ordered copies of it, by His Majesty's command, to be laid before you.

"I have the pleasure to announce to you that Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales has been happily delivered of a Princess; an event which, by giving additional stability to his Majesty's august house, cannot fail to afford you the highest satisfaction.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

"I observe with the sincerest pleasure, that, notwithstanding the continued pressure of the war, the commerce and revenues of this kingdom have not in any degree fallen from that flourishing state of advancement, which, in the last session of Parliament, was a subject of such just congratulation. This circumstance affords a decisive proof that your prosperity is founded on a solid basis, and leads me to indulge the flattering hope, that whatever additional burthens you may find it necessary to impose will not be materially felt by the people.

"I have ordered the public accounts and estimates for the ensuing year to be laid before you, and have no doubt of your readiness to provide such supplies as a due sense of the exigencies of the kingdom shall suggest, and a wise policy of strengthening His Majesty's exertions for procuring a solid and permanent peace, shall appear to render necessary.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"It is with regret that I feel myself obliged to advert to those secret and treasonable associations, the dangerous extent and malignity of which have, in some degree, been disclosed in several trials; and to the disturbances which have taken place in some parts of the kingdom. It has, at the same time, been a source of great satisfaction to me to observe the successful and meritorious exertions of the magistrates in several parts of the kingdom, and the alacrity which His Majesty's regular and militia forces have universally manifested in aid of the civil power, whenever they have been called upon for the preservation of the peace and support of the laws. It remains for your prudence and wisdom to devise such measures as, together with the continuance of those exertions, and with the additional power which, by the advice of the privy council, I have thought it necessary to establish in different counties, will prevent the return of similar excesses, and restore a proper reverence for the laws of the country.

"The superior and increasing importance of the agriculture and manufactures, and particularly of the linen manufacture of the kingdom, will command your accustomed support. Under the present situation of Europe, you cannot fail to attend with peculiar vigilance to the general state of provisions; and, if circumstances shall at any time render your interposition adviseable, I

have no doubt of your adopting such measures as shall best apply to the existing necessity of the times.

"I am also desirous of pointing your attention to the Protestant charter schools, and other institutions of public charity and improvement.

"Your unanimity and zeal can never be of more importance than at the present crisis, in order to impress the enemy with a thorough conviction of the resources of His Majesty's kingdom, and to procure a favourable termination to your honourable efforts. His Majesty has the fullest reliance on your firmness and attachment, and on the fortitude, spirit, and perseverance of his people.

"It will be my ambition, as it is my duty, to represent your zeal in His Majesty's service; and it will be my personal and most anxious wish to co-operate with your efforts in the common cause in which we are all equally engaged and interested; and my utmost endeavours shall be used to secure the happiness and prosperity of this kingdom, and to protect and maintain its most excellent constitution."

Lord Tyrone moved an address in answer to His Majesty's speech; it was seconded by Colonel Foster.

Mr. GRATTAN said: that the address, as far as expressing our abhorrence at the daring outrage committed on the person of our sovereign *, and as far as expressing our congratulations on the increase of his domestic happiness, and as far as it went to compliment Lord Camden, it met with his approbation; but that part of the address which expressed a confidence in the present administration, met with his decided disapprobation. He said that Ireland has not been treated with respect. The people of Ireland were loyal to their sovereign, and how have they been treated? The system of the British minister has been to treat us uniformly with insolence and contumely; and the system of the administration for these several years past has been profligate and corrupt. He took a retrospect of the administration of the Marquis of Buckingham, who was sent over here to promise that which he did not perform. He adverted to the sale of peerages, for the purpose of obtaining a corrupt and undue influence in the House of Commons, which had been part of the system of the Buckingham administration. He next adverted to the dispensing power of a former Lord-lieutenant (the Earl of Westmoreland) to take away the army from this kingdom, contrary to law, which should always consist of an effective force of 12,000 men, for the home defence; and which, in the months of June, July, August, September, October, and November, were considerably under that number. In the American war we had been left naked, and in the French

* The attempt on His Majesty's life.

war we had been left naked: these two impeachable crimes under the British administration!

He reprobated the conduct of a former administration towards the Catholics of this country. The hornets of government were sent out to the different county grand juries, in order to procure addresses and resolutions to wall out the Catholics from the constitution, as the English had formerly walled out the Scotch, and the Chinese the Tartars. He said, that the British cabinet, during the administration of Lord Fitzwilliam, had broken faith with this country. He reprobated the conduct of Lord Westmoreland in granting the reversion of every capital employment in this kingdom, after his successor had been appointed; and that, during his administration, fourteen new employments had been created, and thirteen reversions granted away; this system he reprobated in very strong and severe terms. He said, that the conduct of the British cabinet towards this country was influenced by false witnesses against Ireland; by bad viceroys, who had acted in their administration unfavourable to Ireland; and, if not by bad viceroys, the British cabinet was influenced by clerks, by spies, and by runners.

Having dwelt for some time on the conduct of the British cabinet towards this country, which hath drained itself of its men and money for the support of Great Britain, he contrasted the conduct of the British cabinet towards other countries. The British minister offered one million eight hundred thousand pounds to the King of Prussia, for the supply of 32,000 men; the King of Prussia takes the money, and afterwards makes peace with the French republic. He subsidizes the King of Sardinia at an expence of two hundred thousand pounds annually, in order to defend himself. He next alluded to the Emperor of Germany, who, after being defeated at the battle of Jemappe, had surrendered Luxemburgh, and, being driven out of the Low Countries, had a loan granted to him by the British minister, of four millions sterling. He said he should take no notice of the conduct of Holland, nor of that ardent lady the Empress of Russia. He mentioned the conduct of the British minister towards America, where he was obliged to strike; and, alluding to the treaty between Great Britain and the United States of America, the Americans by that treaty, were allowed to trade to our possessions in both the East and West Indies.

He compared the conduct of the British minister to that of a timorous bully, who strikes Ireland as he was running away from France; he charged the British minister with cajoling Ireland out of her revenue; and he insisted that a

crime against Ireland was a crime against the empire. At the very time that Holland was gone; that Prussia had deserted us; that Spain had lowered her tone, her armies defeated, and her sovereign tottering on his throne, and made a peace with the French republic, at this very time the British minister thought fit to insult Ireland. After animadverting, in very pointed terms, on the conduct of the British cabinet towards America, when it was under the dominion of England, he concluded a speech of considerable length, with moving an amendment to the address, nearly to the following purport; — "That we shall pay every attention to preserve the peace and good order of the country; and also pursue such measures as may tend to improve and amend the condition of the poorer classes of the people; and humbly to beseech His Majesty, with a view to endear Great Britain and Ireland still more to one another, and for the purpose of enabling this kingdom more effectually to bear the burthen of the war, that His Majesty will be graciously pleased to recommend to his Parliament of Great Britain, such measures as may admit the Irish manufacture into Great-Britain, on terms not less advantageous than those on which British manufactures are now admitted into Ireland."

Mr. Vandeleur seconded the amendment. It was supported by Mr. W. Tighe, Mr. Duquery, Mr. Fletcher, and Mr. Curran. It was opposed by Sir Edward Newenham, Mr. Barrington, Mr. Corry, Mr. Osborne, and Mr. Archdall, who animadverted severely upon that passage in Mr. Grattan's answer to the Roman Catholic address, "instantly embrace and greatly emancipate." He said, that whoever talked of impeachments, and of a blow at the neck of the Earl of Westmoreland, should first think and tremble for his own. He was then called to order.

Mr. Grattan said: There was no sedition in the expressions, "instantly embrace and greatly emancipate." He meant, that the people should be completely emancipated, and thus be peaceably united. If Mr. Archdall thought this was sedition, why did he not follow it up by a prosecution?

The House divided; for Amendment 14, against it 122; Majority against the amendment 108. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Grattan, and Mr. Vandeleur. Noes, Mr. Stewart and Mr. Corry.

INSURRECTION AND INDEMNITY BILLS.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES THAT THE JUDGES SHOULD ATTEND THE HOUSE ON THE MOTION OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL, TO BRING IN TWO BILLS TO PRESERVE THE PUBLIC PEACE, AND TO INDEMNIFY PERSONS FOR HAVING ACTED AGAINST LAW.

February 3. 1796.

AT the commencement of the session, the Attorney-general (Mr. Wolfe) had mentioned that it was his intention to introduce two bills; one to prevent insurrections and riots, the other to indemnify certain magistrates and others, who, in their exertions to preserve the public tranquillity, had acted against the forms and rules of law. On the 28th of January, he moved for leave to bring them in. He observed that bills of indemnity were not novel in the constitution. In England several bills of indemnity have been passed since the Revolution. The principle of the bill was to indemnify those persons who had nobly dared to preserve the tranquillity of the country, and who, in quelling tumults and insurrections, had exceeded the ordinary forms of the law. This principle was constantly adopted in Great Britain.

It appeared by the statute book, that a bill of indemnity was passed in the first year of King William III.; another in the first year of George I., when a rebellion broke out in Scotland; another in the Scotch rebellion of 1746; and another in 1780, after the riots of London.

After having stated these precedents, he moved for leave "To bring in a bill for indemnifying such persons as have acted since the 1st day of January 1795, for the preservation of the public peace, and suppression of insurrections prevailing in some parts of this kingdom." Mr. Fletcher observed on the precedents quoted by the Attorney-general, and conceived that they did not apply to the case of Ireland. Leave was then given; and the Attorney-general (Mr. Wolfe), the Solicitor-general (Mr. Toler), together with the honourable Mr. Stewart (afterwards Lord Castlereagh), and the Prime-serjeant were directed to bring in the same. The Attorney-general then presented the bill, "For more effectually preventing insurrections, tumults, and riots, by persons styling themselves Defenders, &c. and other disorderly persons." These bills were read, and ordered to be printed; and on this day, Mr. Grattan made his promised motion on the subject. He said:

That he wished to submit a motion to the House, respecting the bill of indemnification brought forward by the Attor-

ney-general: it was a motion for the purpose of obtaining that degree of information, which he thought necessary to justify the House in adopting the bill.

He had before expressed his wish that the bill should be received with the utmost calmness, and its principle argued with deliberation and temper. He did not now rise to oppose or condemn the bill; he merely wished for information touching its necessity. He did not mean to move for a committee of general enquiry, but merely an examination of the facts which were stated to constitute the occasion of such a bill and the conduct of those magistrates, the indemnification of whose proceedings was the avowed object of the proposed measure.

On this head, the most competent evidence would be, in his mind, that of the learned judges who went the circuits into the disturbed counties, and afterwards that of the high sheriffs of those counties. If it should appear that a breach of the laws was rendered necessary by the urgency of existing circumstances, in order to preserve the state, to maintain public tranquillity, and to put down insurrection, the bill might pass without opposition.

Feeling, therefore, this enquiry absolutely necessary to justify the House in adopting a bill of such material importance, he moved, "That the Honourable Justice Chamberlain, and the Honourable Baron Smyth, do attend this House to-morrow."

The motion was opposed by Mr. Sergeant Stanley, Sir E. Crofton, Mr. O'Hara, Mr. Conolly, Mr. Ogle, the Attorney-general, Mr. Rochfort, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Westby, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the ground that the consequence would be an unnecessary delay, and that the disturbed state of the country was notorious.

They stated that the principles of Defenderism were disseminated all over the kingdom. The evidence on and the decisions at the various trials that had lately taken place, were proofs of a traitorous conspiracy; bodies of insurgents marched in array through the country, attacked in force, towns in the province of Connaught, and plundered them of arms. The powers of the civil magistrate were insufficient, and the country was greatly indebted to Lord Carhampton for the activity with which he had put down insurrection.

The motion was supported by Mr. Jephson, Mr. Egan, Sir L. Parsons, Mr. G. Ponsonby, and Mr. Curran.

They contended that the present measure was of too strong a nature. When such measures had been resorted to in England, the country was in open rebellion; and even on those occasions, such acts of indemnity only went to the arresting suspected per-

sons; breaking open houses, and pressing horses; but the present act covers the actual transportation of men without form of law, or shadow of trial. It went still further, as it indemnifies for the actual taking and transporting men from His Majesty's gaols, where they could not be dangerous.

Mr. G. Ponsonby spoke in favour of Mr. Grattan's motion, and strongly recommended an enquiry. He heard it generally reported, that prisoners were taken from gaol just before the assizes, when they ought to be tried, and sent on board His Majesty's ships; it was also said that magistrates had privately conferred together, and, without evidence of any kind, had, at their own pleasure, arrested and dragged the peasants from their beds at midnight, and transported their fellow-subjects without trial of any kind.

Mr. Grattan replied to the several gentlemen who spoke against his motion. However he honoured the suggestions of country gentlemen, he thought that something more than suggestions were necessary in making laws, such as those before the House. He was the more confirmed in this, because in England inquiry always preceded acts of this nature; and he mentioned as an instance, the committee which had been appointed to inquire into the necessity of suspending the *habeas corpus* act, on a late occasion. He was confirmed in his opinion, that enquiry should be had, because, notwithstanding the strong measures of the magistracy, the country yet remained in a state of suppressed insurrection. The motion, he was convinced, was therefore proper, and it would not be wise in the House, if they rejected the present enquiry, and refused to look into the state of the country, before the expiration of the session.

Delay could not be objected to the motion, for the enquiry proposed might be had in twenty-four hours; and, as to the argument, that the information sought was unnecessary, he must say, that however unnecessary it might be to those gentlemen who were conversant with the state of the convulsed counties, to others it was not unnecessary. He granted, that when magistrates, professing the public safety as their object, violated the law, the presumption should be in favour of the magistrates; but presumption alone should not be sufficient for the House to act on; something more should be looked for. As to what had been said to this subject by the country gentlemen, he should only observe, that were he a country gentleman, he should have voted for the enquiry, however full his own information might be; because not to do so, would be to vote an indemnity to himself, being in the magistracy, without suffering the public to know whether he was guilty or innocent. Besides, in the subject of the disturbances, the

passions of gentlemen were engaged, and these were not wise counsellors in legislation.

With respect to the inability of the judges, to give satisfactory information, he would ask were they not intelligent observers of facts, and of the conduct of the magistrates? Must not government have consulted them before they brought forward the measure? And if they could give satisfactory information to government, why not to the House? If, however, notwithstanding these reasons, the House should think proper to reject the inquiry, he must acquiesce; he still, however, retained a full conviction of its necessity.

The question on the order of the day being put, it passed without a division.

The bill was then read a second time, and committed for next day, and finally passed.

EQUALIZING DUTIES.

MR. GRATTAN'S MOTION ON THE CHANNEL TRADE.

February 15. 1796.

MR. GRATTAN rose to bring forward his promised motion regarding the regulation of the channel trade between Great Britain and Ireland, by reciprocally admitting the manufactures of either country into the other, upon equal rates of duty.

The question, he said, now stood upon different ground from what it had done at former periods in which it had been agitated; it was, heretofore, rather a question of general debate than of division, for the justice of the principle had not been denied, though the measure had been hitherto evaded. But, he contended, that sound policy, as well as strict justice, called upon Great Britain no longer to resist a principle of which no man can deny the propriety. Inasmuch as interest was that link of iron which bound nations in mutual amity, insomuch was this principle calculated to cement the two countries in stronger attachments, and to extirpate all invidious jealousies, which an illiberal opposition of interests had some time sown between them. If any doubt of the wisdom of this policy existed before the French treaty, such doubts

must now be removed for ever; for, truly, England would not pretend to argue for the justice of opening her ports for the manufacture of a natural enemy, and yet shut them against those of Ireland; she would not surely persist in a principle so preposterously unjust. It was a principle already admitted by gentlemen on the other side of the House, who recommended a reliance upon the exertions of those who were in the confidence of the British government, rather than any declaration or exertion on the part of the Parliament of Ireland. A noble lord, who was minister of the crown in that House, when the question was brought forward in 1792 (Lord Hobart), promised and undertook the negotiation and settlement of this business with the British government; and it was generally understood, that the matter was in train, and would have been adjusted, fully to the satisfaction of Ireland. He believed that the noble lord was sincere in his purpose, and was convinced it had not failed through any inactivity on his part. The matter had, however, again dropped into neglect; and, since the departure of that noble lord from this country, no proposal whatever had come forward from any of his successors.

For his own part, he did not think the measure was such a one, as could be effected by negociation, unaided by some step or resolution, however temperate on the part of Parliament, whose duty to their country loudly called for their interference. It was by this mode of proceeding that Ireland had obtained her free constitution; her free trade; the independence of her legislature; and every valuable privilege, political and commercial, that she now enjoyed.

The equality of trade he looked for, was not that which gave us a participation of commerce in the West, in lieu of resigning our right to trade to the East, but an equality such as ought to subsist between two free and friendly nations; more especially, nations pledged to stand or fall together; nations bound by the ties of common interest, and common affection; governed by one King, one constitution, and linked in one common fate.

Ireland had contributed to the general aid in these times of misfortune, largely indeed; her debt was increased five millions; her taxes, 300,000*l.* per annum; she had replenished the fleets of England, and recruited her armies; had contributed largely in provisions, and largely by the zeal of the country; she was not, therefore, unreasonable in asking what was admitted to be her right before she made those exertions. It was said, that the trade of the country was prosperous, and likely to prosper; it might be so; but the country had over-

drawn her ability. To answer such exertions, her resources should be multiplied. What was the statement of the country? in ten years her linen manufacture had increased one-third; in the last three, it had been at a stand. Her debt in four years had increased five millions; her taxes in ten years had increased half a million, so that she had overdrawn her ability. The revenues of the last year were said to be flourishing, but that arose from the including the arrears of the former year paid in; but the last half-year's accounts would show the truth. He did not state these circumstances to inspire difficulty, but to induce gentlemen to seek for further resources; our resources should be multiplied as our expences were increased.

The Lord-lieutenant's speech from the throne very laudably pointed the attention of Parliament to the manufactures of the country. The speech, in this instance, could not merely mean the linen manufacture, in the promotion of which the zeal and exertions of Parliament were already unremitting; but must have meant the multiplying of other manufactures, by which the general prosperity of the country would be advanced, and the general situation of the lower orders of the people ameliorated; and how could this be done more effectually than by establishing a reciprocity between the ports and markets of both countries, for the manufactures of each other?

The original system of commerce between Great Britain and Ireland was, as to this country, merely colonial. It was settled on a principle which obliged Ireland to prefer England, not only to all other nations, but even to herself, and in her own markets; but he would grant this principle had been a good deal done away by the measures which took place in 1779, and since.

With respect to the object he had in view, he thought that if a British minister was ever so much attached to the measure, it would be impossible for him to effect it without some interference, some declaration on the part of the Irish Parliament, in terms however temperate, as to the right and claim of Ireland; and if the Parliament of Ireland should refuse to interfere on the part of their constituents, how was it to be expected that a British minister should? Ireland could not succeed in this object, unless when she had something to give away. In 1791, in 1792, a measure had been brought before the House, relative to the East India trade; the right of Ireland to a share of that trade was admitted, but the question was got rid of generally by the order of the day. At length the charter of the India Company came to be renewed; the Parliament of Ireland passed an act, giving to the Company an

exclusive trade as far as this country was concerned; and, in return, this country received a share of that trade, because she had something to give away. The right had been repeatedly admitted on all sides; and the only argument against the fruition of this right, was the inexpediency of particular persons, or the illiberal jealousy of British manufacturers. But those were arguments that must for ever exist and prevail, unless the Irish Parliament would assert the justice of the claim on behalf of their country, and express some feeling of the injustice this country had so long patiently sustained. It was from such an interference on the part of her Parliament, and not from her good manners of passive submission, that Ireland had any justice to expect on this head.

Mr. Grattan having dwelt at much length on this head, proposed two motions: the one a resolution "that it is just and expedient, that the manufactures of Ireland be admitted into the ports of Great Britain, on terms not less favourable than those of Great Britain, are admitted into the ports of Ireland."

The other, "that an humble address be presented to His Majesty, laying before him this resolution, and beseeching that he would be graciously pleased to recommend to his Parliament of Great Britain the adoption of such measures as should tend to that effect."

Mr. Vandeleur seconded the motion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that he admitted the principles that the right honourable gentleman urged were just and equitable, but the time at which they were pressed forward was injudicious: the measure was one to be effected rather by negotiation than by parliamentary interference; and he hoped when it could be brought forward with propriety, it would be accomplished. Great concessions had been made by Great Britain; and it was better that the business should be effectuated in a manner honourable to both countries, than rashly urged on one hand, or ungraciously ceded on the other. Agreeing in the principle and object, but differing with respect to the expediency of the time, he would move the order of the day. The motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was supported by Sir Hercules Langrishe, and opposed by Sir Laurence Parsons, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. W. Smith, Mr. Curran, and Mr. O'Hara.

Mr. GRATTAN observed in reply, that he admitted, with gentlemen on the other side, the growth of the country, but he denied the proportion. That they were erroneous, first, in the exaggerated statement of her prosperity; secondly, in urging their fond and extravagant calculations as an argument for continuing her expences without enlarging her commerce. Her principal growth had been in the article of linen: it was

much relied on; she had in that article, in the last ten years, increased her export one-third, or about a million, (her export of any other manufactures is nothing,) the increase, then, of your export of manufacture has been 1,000,000*l.* in ten years; in the same time your permanent expences have increased above 500,000*l.* a-year: that he did not include in those expences the war establishment, and that he concluded from this establishment what he had asserted before, that we had overdrawn our prosperity, and that the growth of our expences exceeded in proportion the growth of our exports.

As to the revenues, he observed that the loans of the war had been above 5,000,000*l.* — 700,000*l.* in 1793; 1,300,000*l.* in 1794; 1,900,000*l.* in 1795; and this year 700,000*l.*, besides the vote of credit. That each year of the war had introduced new taxes, and each list of taxes were calculated at above 100,000*l.* per annum each year. That in the last half year these taxes had come into full operation, and yet the produce of the last half year was but 421,000*l.*, which was less than the corresponding half year, or less than any half year of the war, while the charge stated in the half yearly account was 2,000,000*l.*, and the payments in that half year near one million and a half. It has been said, that we are not to estimate our trade or revenue by the produce in war; true; but gentlemen themselves have done so; and have boasted that the actual produce was surprizing; and have, from that statement, hinted something very like an apology for neglecting the duty of opening new sources of trade. He said he had entered into the calculation taken from their own papers, not to instil despondency, but to check vain confidence, and an unfounded display of riches; which, by encouraging your expence, without enlarging your commerce, led to poverty, and which taught a British minister, by your own authority, to adopt projects of expence, and to reject projects of commerce; a plan which must end in correcting those blessings, the result of that free trade which the exertions of the nation had procured — which the industry of the people had nursed, but which the expences of the state would blast, unless supported by new sources of commerce, and render abortive. This kind of language cries out to an English minister "we are very rich; our revenues, in the midst of war, are abundant; our trade, in the midst of war, is prodigious." The minister will carry your exhortation beyond your intention, and collect from you that he may increase your burden, and that he need not increase your commerce. The argument which over-rates your riches is less dangerous than that other argument which under-rates your pretensions; he meant that argument that

tells an English minister that, in the intercourse between the islands, Ireland has the advantage; for that the balance of trade is in her favour 1,300,000*l.*; fallacious calculation, partial statement this of the relative situation of these countries. Foreign trade, it has been said, is against us, but in our trade with England there is a balance of 1,300,000*l.* in our favour. But do we not know that foreign trade appears to be against Ireland principally, because Irish trade is for England; because England is the carrier of your foreign trade: and as to the balance of 1,300,000*l.*, he begged to know whether that was the whole of the case, or of the relative situation of the two countries? he reminded gentlemen that the absentee rental was nearly equal; it does not exceed that balance, and which, gentlemen, in calculating the reciprocal advantages and disadvantages of the countries, had thought proper to omit that the absentee rental in 1766 was calculated to be 600,000*l.* per annum, and that rental had since that time doubled. But that this was not the only error in gentlemen's calculation; for that of the exports from Ireland to Great Britain, linen was almost the only manufacture, part of which England re-exported; so far she was your carrier, not your consumer; and, therefore, on that article, part of your obligation is only apparent; the other articles are principally the rudiments of manufacture or manufactures, in a very early and unfinished state; this is the case of hides, of worsted, and of linen-yarn: these England improves and fructifies, so as to obtain thereon a very considerable gain. The articles of Irish worsted and linen-yarn alone, are calculated to produce to England, when manufactured, above 1,000,000*l.* a-year; what then becomes of this balance of 1,300,000*l.*? The absentee rental sweeps away almost the whole of that balance, and then there appears on the other side, in favour of England, a balance of gain from the various articles of unmanufactured goods, which are in abundance sent to England from this country, and which, in the instances of worsted and linen, amount to about a million. Thus it appeared that the case was the reverse of gentlemen's representation: it appeared that the balance of obligation was against England, not Ireland; that England was the debtor of Ireland; that Ireland was to her inestimable, not only from our physical situation, our harbours, and the like; not only from the provision and the men whom we give her, and without whom she could not have a fleet nor an army; not only from an immense draft from this country to England by an absentee rental, but from a commercial intercourse, by which she is our carrier, possesses not only a considerable share in our markets in most manufactures, but also has a gain

in our linen manufacture, the only one which she receives from us, and in which intercourse she gets, moreover, the various rudiments of manufacture, which she works up into a great value; whose value, together with the other benefits already mentioned, greatly overbalance the trade account that appears in our favour, and constitute, on the side of England to this country, an immense obligation, which makes a continuation of her prohibitory duties against Ireland a matter of gross and insulting injustice. He said, that he thought it necessary to say so much in reply, in order to refute two dangerous arguments, one of which had a tendency to encourage the minister to increase your expences, and the other taught him to resist your just pretensions.

He observed, that he did not know that the measure could be carried by negotiation; he had hoped a year ago that it might, and he found he was mistaken; and, from that experience, he was warranted in his motion — that if the measure was left to negotiation, it might perhaps be carried, but that you might be made to pay for it a great deal more than it was worth. He therefore submitted the best way was, that the Parliament of the country should interfere in the cause of her commerce.

The question being put, that the order of the day be read, the House divided;—Ayes 82, Noes 16; Majority 66. Tellers for the Ayes, Sir Hercules Langrishe and Mr. Stephen Moore; for the Noes, Mr. Grattan and Mr. Fletcher.

DISTURBED STATE OF THE COUNTRY. — INSURRECTION BILL.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES AN AMENDMENT TO THE RESOLUTIONS *PROPOSED BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL.*

February 22. 1796.

ON the 20th, the House went into a committee, to enquire what measures would be necessary to restore tranquillity in certain disturbed parts of the country, when the Attorney-general (Mr. Wolfe), after stating the outrages that had taken place, and the seditious meetings that were held in the different counties; and having dwelt upon the necessity of adopting some measures to put a stop to such enormities, concluded by moving the following resolutions:

"I. Resolved, That the spirit of conspiracy and outrage, which has appeared in certain parts of the kingdom, and has shown itself, in various attempts to assassinate magistrates; to murder witnesses; to plunder houses; and seize by force, the arms of His Majesty's peaceable subjects, requires that more effectual powers should be given to the magistracy.

"II. Resolved, That in such parts of this kingdom as the said spirit hath shown itself, or to which there may be cause to apprehend its being extended, it will be necessary that the magistracy should have enlarged powers of searching for arms, ammunition, and weapons of offence, and of seizing or securing the same, for the preservation of the peace, and the safety of the lives and properties of His Majesty's peaceable and loyal subjects.

"III. Resolved, That from the many attacks which have been made on the houses of individuals, by large bodies of armed insurgents, for the purpose of taking arms and money by force, and murdering those who have had the spirit to enforce the laws, or give information against offenders, it will be necessary that the magistracy should have enlarged powers, to prevent such bodies hereafter, from assembling or meeting, either to plan or execute such horrid purposes.

"IV. Resolved, That it will be necessary to give the magistracy further powers, with respect to vagabonds, idle and disorderly persons, and to persons liable to be deemed so, and who have no lawful trade, or any honest means to obtain a livelihood."

Lord Edward Fitzgerald opposed the first resolution, and declared it to be his opinion, that nothing would tranquillize the country but the sincere endeavour of the government to redress the grievances of the people. If that was done, the people would return to their allegiance, if not, he feared that neither resolutions or bills would be of any avail.

Mr. Arthur Browne stated, that he could not entirely approve of these measures, but would not in the present instance oppose them.

Mr. Pelham and Mr. Vandeleur supported the resolutions, which were severally put and carried, and on this day (the 22d), the report of the committee was brought up, and the resolutions having been read,

Mr. Grattan observed, that he heard the right honourable gentleman's statement, and did not suppose it to be inflamed, but he must observe at the same time it was partial. He did indeed expatiate very fully and justly on the offences of the Defenders; but with respect to another description of insurgents, whose barbarities had excited general abhorrence, he had observed a complete silence; he had proceeded to enumerate the counties that were afflicted by disturbances, and he had omitted Armagh; neither had he comprehended the outrages in his general description, nor in his particular

enumeration of those outrages. He had received the most dreadful accounts; that their object was the extermination of all the Catholics of that county. It was a prosecution conceived in the bitterness of bigotry, carried on with the most ferocious barbarity, by a banditti, who being of the religion of the state, had committed with the greater audacity and confidence, the most horrid murders, and had proceeded from robbery and massacre to extermination; they had repealed by their own authority, all the laws lately passed in favour of the Catholics, had established in the place of those laws, the inquisition of a mob, resembling Lord George Gordon's fanatics, equalling them in outrage, and surpassing far in perseverance and success.

Their modes of outrage were as various as they were atrocious; they sometimes forced by terror, the masters of families to dismiss their Catholic servants; they sometimes forced landlords by terror, to dismiss their Catholic tenantry; they seized as deserters, numbers of Catholic weavers; sent them to the county gaol, transmitted them to Dublin, where they remained in close prison, until some lawyers from compassion pleaded their cause, and procured their enlargement — nothing appearing against them of any kind whatsoever. Those insurgents, who called themselves Orange Boys, or Protestant Boys — that is, a banditti of murderers, committing massacre in the name of God, and exercising despotic power in the name of liberty; those insurgents have organized their rebellion, and have formed themselves into a committee, who sit and try the Catholic weavers and inhabitants, when apprehended, falsely and illegally, as deserters; this rebellious committee, they call the committee of elders, who, when the unfortunate Catholic is torn from his family and his loom, and brought before them, sit in judgment upon his case; if he gives them liquor or money, they sometimes discharge him; otherwise, they send him then to a recruiting office as a deserter. They had very generally given the Catholics notice to quit their farms and dwellings, which notice is plastered on their houses, and conceived in these short but plain words — "Go to Hell, Connaught will not receive you — fire and faggot! Will. Thresham and John Thrustout." They followed these notices by a faithful and punctual execution of the horrid threat, soon after visited the house, robbed the family, and destroyed what they did not take; and, finally, completed the atrocious persecutions, by forcing the unfortunate inhabitants to leave their land, their dwellings and their trade, and to travel with their miserable family, and with whatever their miserable family could save from the wreck of their

houses and tenements, and take refuge in villages as fortifications against invaders where they described themselves, as I have seen in their affidavits, in the following manner; " We, (mentioning their names) formerly of Armagh, weavers, now of no fixed place of abode or means of living," &c. In many instances this banditti of persecution threw down the houses of the tenantry, or what they call racked the house, so that the family must fly or be buried in the grave of their own cabin. The extent of the murders that have been committed by this atrocious and rebellious banditti, I have heard; but have not heard them so ascertained as to state them to this House, but from all the enquiries I could make, I collect that the Catholic inhabitants of Armagh, have been actually *put out of the protection of the law*; that the magistrates have been supine or partial, and that the horrid banditti has met with complete success, and from the magistracy with very little discouragement. This horrid persecution, this abominable barbarity, and this general extermination, have been acknowledged by the magistrates, who, finding the evil had now proceeded to so shameful an excess, that it at length obliged themselves to cry out against it, came to the following resolution, which is an evidence of the designs of the insurgents, and of their success. The magistrates of Armagh on the 28th of December (thirty of them in number) came to the following resolution —" Resolved, that it appears to this meeting, that the county of Armagh is at this moment in a state of uncommon disorder; that the Roman Catholic inhabitants are grievously oppressed by lawless persons unknown, who attack and plunder their houses by night, and threaten them with instant destruction, unless they abandon immediately their lands and habitations." It was said by the mover of the resolutions, that of the Defenders, multitudes had been hanged, multitudes had been put to death on the field, and that they were suppressed, though they were not extinguished; but with regard to the outrages of the Orange-men, he could make no such boast, but on the contrary, they have met with impunity, and success, and triumph; they have triumphed over the law; they have triumphed over the magistrates; and they have triumphed over the people; here persecution, rebellion, inquisition, murder, robbery, devastation and extermination have been entirely victorious.

The passing over these offences in the statement introducing the resolutions, would be of little moment, if they were not also passed over in the resolutions themselves; the resolutions describe four different kinds of offences; attempts to assassinate magistrates; 2d, to murder witnesses; 3d, to

plunder houses; 4th, to seize, by force, the arms of His Majesty's subjects: but of attempts to seize the persons of His Majesty's subjects, and to force them to abandon their lands and habitations, the resolutions say not one syllable; crimes not less great, nor less notorious, and more emphatically calling for the interposition of the state, because they had triumphed over the supineness of the magistracy, and had no chance of being checked, but by the interposition of government or Parliament. In the other resolution, which describes that kind of armed insurgency, which the magistracy are to prevent by extraordinary exertions, the crime of driving away His Majesty's subjects, is also omitted; the words are, "That from the many attempts which have been made on the houses of individuals, by large bodies of armed insurgents, for the purpose of taking arms and money by force, and murdering those who had spirit to enforce the law, or give information against offenders, it will be necessary to give the magistrates enlarged powers." Attempts made on the houses of the individual to rob or take arms; attempts to murder witnesses; these are the offences which attract your notice; but the attempt to exterminate His Majesty's subjects; attempts in part completed, which are very different from seizing arms, or taking money, or murdering witnesses; these attempts and perpetrations, as notorious as horrible, appear to be neither in the contemplation of the resolutions, nor of the member who moved them. Thus the silence of the resolutions may become a hint to the supineness of the magistracy, and where they should have counteracted, their partiality may give it countenance. On a further examination of the resolutions, I find them not merely defective in describing the offence, but they seem to me to have omitted the remedy; certainly the giving magistrates further powers to search for arms and ammunition, or to prevent from assembling or meeting, bodies of men assembling for the purpose of taking arms and money, or murdering witnesses; or the giving the magistrates enlarged power to seize vagabonds for the fleet or army, does not go to the case of Armagh, where the subjects complain that they have been seized as deserters, falsely and illegally, through the supineness or partiality, or connivance of the magistrates; and through the same supineness, to say no worse, have been by force, driven with impunity from their lands and habitations; many of the weavers of Armagh, have at this moment sworn affidavits against the magistrates. To give the magistrates extraordinary powers as the means of redressing the complainants, seems to me, however, a remedy for some part of the kingdom, but a very inadequate one

for another. In short, the measure of the right honourable gentleman, in its present shape, does not go to the whole of the situation of the country; it does not go to redress the north; it is therefore a defective measure; it is a partial description of the outrages of the kingdom, and a partial remedy; it proposes to suspend the operation of the constitution with a view to produce peace, leaving at the same time, in one great county, violence and insurrection in a state of triumph; it leaves the families of Armagh, whom a violent mob, and a supine magistracy have caused to abandon their dwellings; it leaves them without any certainty of redress, so that they may carry themselves and families, and tales of woe; to their brethren in the other parts of the kingdom, and spread the flames of discontent and spirit of retaliation, notwithstanding the member's bills and resolutions.

On a principle, therefore, that it is necessary for the redress of that description of subjects, who have suffered in Armagh, that the magistrates should be called upon to act for the protection of the subject, and that the county should be obliged to pay those inhabitants, who have been aggrieved, full compensation for all their losses, charges and distresses, I take the liberty to suggest to the right honourable member, amendments which I do not move, because he ought to move them, and make them his own measure.

The amendments I suggest are — after the words "To seize by force of arms;" to add, "and also the persons of His Majesty's subjects, and to force them to abandon their lands and habitations;" and in the third resolution, after the words "murdering those who had spirit to give information;" to add, "also attempting to seize the persons, and obliging His Majesty's subjects by force, to abandon their lands and habitations."

The amendment was opposed by Mr. Pelham, (secretary), the Attorney-general, Mr. Maurice Fitzgerald, Mr. Corry, and Sir John Blaquiere. They stated, that they were convinced of the impartiality with which the powers sought for would be exercised, and this without reference to the religious principles of either party, whether Protestant or Catholic. The disturbed state of the country required such new measures as these to be adopted for the protection of His Majesty's loyal subjects.

Mr. William Smith (afterwards one of the Barons of the Exchequer), expressed himself disposed to think the measure would appear more unexceptionable if the amendment was adopted. The resolutions would then be more perfect than they stood at present. In his opinion the government would not be disposed to favour one species of treason, but would equally punish the crimes of all classes and all parties.

Mr. GRATTAN, in reply, said: that the right honourable member had admitted the propriety of the amendment, but objects to the adoption, because it would be a confession of the original error and partiality of his resolution. The fact of partiality is apparent on the face of the resolutions, whether the member adopts the amendment or not; but if he wishes to avoid the surmise of the intention of partiality, he cannot do better than accede to an amendment, which makes his resolution perfectly impartial. The member will not say that every thing which is fixed in the meetings of ministers is to be adhered to, right or wrong, as sacred and inviolable, on a point of pride, lest they should make a public admission of their own fallibility; however, the member has attempted to object to the amendment, after having admitted its propriety, as going into the detail of insurgency; — his resolution has done so, and since he has thought proper to go into the detail, he should have taken care that his detail should have been accurate. He has attempted to reduce the insurrection of Ireland under certain genera, and one genus he has entirely omitted — a genus as great as any of the others, and more successful; the same omission has attended him in his statement, and in his remedy; but a right honourable gentleman has said, the hostility in Armagh does not go to affect the government. Indeed! the persecution of one entire description of his Majesty's subjects, the extermination of them — the rising up, not against the houses of certain individuals, but of a whole tribe. Does the member mean, that such an offence does not affect the government? What is treason? Is not the rising up, and levelling enclosures or chapels held to be high treason; the extermination of his Majesty's subjects — what is that? Does not that affect the government? gentlemen say not. What! putting the subject out of the protection of the law, does not that go to affect the government? Riot, rebellion, persecution, massacre, and extermination! These unfortunate people emigrate, and carry with them their tales of woe, and their family to their brothers in the other parts of the kingdom. May not the consequences of that go to the government, and every person inhabiting Catholic countries? — I must own, I know of no question which does so much go to affect government. It has been objected to this amendment, that it makes a religious distinction; the contrary. The resolutions of the right honourable member make a religious distinction, and we make the discovery; his resolutions omit the outrages committed against Catholics; and we propose to include them; observing at the same time, that such a proposal appears so much

the more necessary, from what fell from an honourable gentleman, a magistrate of the county of Armagh, who dissenting from every other person, has spoken of the use of what he calls Orange-men, of the services rendered by these murderers; this atrocious banditti, the northern rebels, whose barbarity exceeds that of modern times, and brings back the recollection of ancient ferocity and bloodshed. I ask gentlemen who have heard the magistrate apologize for such murderers, whether the increasing the power of the magistracy will be of itself sufficient to redress the sufferings of the northern Catholics?

I must, therefore, persist in recommending to the right honourable gentleman my amendments, which, if he persists to refuse, I must see how vain it is for me to move them; lamenting at the same time, that he should have lost an opportunity of so clearly displaying, what I must presume he wishes — impartiality and justice.

The amendments were rejected and the resolutions were passed in their original form, and leave was given to bring in a bill grounded upon them.

INSURRECTION BILL.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES THE RE-COMMITTAL OF THE INSURRECTION BILL.

February 29. 1796.

ON the preceding day, the insurrection bill was read a second time, when Sir L. Parsons stated his objections to it at length; he dwelt much upon the poverty and the wretched state of the Irish peasantry; he conceived that an enquiry should have been instituted into the causes of their grievances and discontents, before such a severe measure was adopted.

Mr. A. Browne coincided in this opinion; the discontents of the country were not likely to be removed by this bill, which he considered was nothing else but a system of terror. Laws of such a criminal nature as this were the symptoms of a weak government.

Mr. R. Stewart (afterwards Lord Castlereagh), strongly objected to the representations that had been made by the gentlemen of the opposition; they were an overcharged picture of imaginary calamities; the bill was necessary to prevent the evils *that* threatened the subversion of the state; at present, trial and conviction by a jury was scarcely practicable in a country *where* such disturbances existed. Mr. Curran defended the conduct of the

opposition, which had been attacked by the supporters of government. He charged them with the discontent which prevailed throughout the country in consequence of their opposing and rejecting those measures that were likely to gratify the people, and which his friends had repeatedly proposed; he declared it to be his firm conviction, that if Lord Fitzwilliam had not been removed, the kingdom would at this moment be in a state of perfect tranquillity. After a long debate, the bill was read a second time and committed; and on this day, when the report was brought up,

Mr. Grattan said, that he was sorry he had not been able to attend the committee, because he was prevented by that absence from proposing an amendment, which he feared, from its length, would have but a small chance of being adopted, unless the bill was re-committed; he knew he could move it on the report, but it would not have a fair trial in that stage of the bill, and for that reason he wished much, that the bill should be re-committed, as the most parliamentary mode of receiving new matter, and affording to that matter full and ample discussion. The amendment he intended, was to compel the county to pay the countryman, whether labourer, or manufacturer, full compensation for his damage and losses, to his person, family, or dwelling, suffered in consequence of violent mobs; that he was apprehensive that if the compensation was left optional to the grand jury, nothing would be done; that the grand jury would readily present for damages suffered by magistrates or witnesses; but they probably would not, in the county of Armagh particularly, give any adequate, or indeed any, satisfaction for losses suffered by the Catholic weaver or peasant; and, therefore, it was not enough that grand juries should have the power, it is indispensable to impose the obligation. Government trifles with the northern weaver, when he sends him for satisfaction to a grand jury, composed of those very magistrates, whose supineness, or partiality, or bigotry, have been the cause of his losses, and his emigration. He, therefore, had formed a clause, which he would read, and by which it was rendered obligatory on the county to indemnify the countryman for the injury he received, when beaten or abused, or driven from his land and habitation.—He said he had read the bill; that he could find no remedy whatsoever in the bill, as at present formed, for such a case; That in the different preambles, the grievance was not set forth; and in the various provisions, it was not comprehended; that the bill complains of violence offered to magistrates, of the murder of witnesses, of illegal oaths, &c.; but of the threats, and force, and violence offered to certain of his Majesty's subjects, whereby they have been forced to quit their

trades, their lands, and their tenements; outrages of which, the governor of a northern county has complained as unexampled in history, and to which violence and atrocity, the magistrates of that county have borne their testimony, by a formal resolution; there is in the bill complete silence and omission. The bill proposes to give extra power to magistrates; this is, or may be very effectual, as to certain parts of the country; but what is the grievance of Armagh? that the magistrates have not used the ordinary powers, and in some cases have abused those powers in such a manner, that the subject has not been protected, and the rioter has been encouraged; that the bill appears therefore without this clause, not faithful to its own principle; it is a bill, unless amended, of partial coercion, and partial redress; it punishes (as it now stands) disturbance in one part of the kingdom, it compromises with disturbance in another; it protects the magistrates of the west, and leaves exposed the poor of the north; it says, if you murder a magistrate, you shall pay his representatives; but if you drive away whole droves of weavers in Armagh, you shall pay nothing, except those persons please, by whose fault they have been driven away, and scattered over the face of the earth. He said that ministers must know perfectly well, that, unless the amendment is adopted, the unfortunate description of persons he mentioned, will get no redress; the government may indeed send a military force to guard what remains of them; but as to the bill, it leaves them precisely as they were. To say that the existing law punishes the offences committed against them is true, and so does the existing law punish the offences committed against magistrates and witnesses, and therefore is an argument against the whole of the bill, as much as against the amendment; but to say that the existing law punishes those offences in such a summary manner as is necessary to restrain them, is unfounded; the truth is, the existing law is not sufficient for the case of Armagh, and the bill does not advert to that case at all; but it has happened that the poorer classes of people have suffered in other places as well as Armagh from mobs, and their houses burned without any redress whatsoever. When the magistrate has suffered, the jury has given meet compensation; when the countryman had his house pulled down, they in some cases have given nothing — a proof that the existing law is not sufficient, and therefore that the amendment is necessary; and, accordingly, the amendment is not confined to one county, but is general; and wherever the subject has suffered in his person, property, or dwelling, it obliges the county to give him satisfaction; for gentlemen will indemnify one another;

but it is not equally certain, that they will indemnify their inferiors. It is, therefore, submitted to you, that you should take this into consideration; and for the cure of a grievance, as notorious as any set forth in the bill, and as unrelenting and outrageous as any thing suffered by gentleman or magistrate, that you should amend your bill, and adopt a proposal which makes it a bill of general relief, and which will tend to reconcile the country people to the strength of the whole of its provisions, when they find themselves included in its redress and protection. The best way of adopting the amendment is to re-commit the bill; for if it is proposed on the report, it is easy to foresee that it will not have a full discussion or a fair chance, whereas, if the bill was in a committee, it is impossible that those persons, who are friends to the principle of the bill, on the real motive of protecting the subject in a summary manner, would not be friends to the amendment. It is the more desirable to proceed by re-committing the bill, because there are other gentlemen who have amendments to propose, one with respect to juries, which seems to me deserving of every consideration. This proposal, however, of re-committing the bill, does not proceed from a wish to oppose its progress, or to interpose delay, but from a conviction that the bill, without the amendment suggested, is false to its own principle; and from a well-grounded fear that the proposal of such an amendment in the House, would not be attended with a fair trial, a full discussion, or the chance of success.

Mr. Grattan's motion to have the bill re-committed, was opposed by the Attorney-general, Sir F. Flood, Mr. Pelham, Mr. Vandeleur, Mr. Barrington, Sir H. Cavendish, Mr. E. Hamilton, Mr. W. Smith, Mr. Holmes, and Sir John Parnell. The ground they went on was the same as on the former occasions; the disturbed state of the country.

The motion was supported by Mr. Tighe, Mr. Saunderson, Mr. Duquery, Sir L. Parsons, and Mr. Ponsonby. They objected to the clauses of the bill; that one which enabled the magistrates to break open the houses of individuals at any hour; another clause which enabled a majority of seven magistrates to declare their county in a state of disturbance; that clause which went to enable any two magistrates to send any man they suspected, on board the fleet; and any man who was out of his house before sunrise or after sun-set.

Mr. George Ponsonby stated, that he did not conceive the liberties of the people of Ireland should be placed in the power and at the will of any two magistrates. He reprobated the conduct of the disorderly part of the community, who, while a constitutional opposition were obtaining for them a place bill, a pension bill, a responsibility bill, and other useful measures, had, by their

violence, induced the necessity of a gunpowder bill and a convention bill, one of which deprived the freeman of his arms, and the other which silenced the voice of the nation; and all which had enabled government to bring forward this measure, which, if permanent, would be the grave of the constitution.

Mr. Egan, Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Blaquiere, Mr. Alexander, and Mr. Fox (afterwards one of the justices of Common Pleas), likewise opposed the motion.

The question was then put on Mr. Grattan's motion, that the bill be re-committed, and negatived without a division. The bill was afterwards passed with some slight amendments.

MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.—SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES AN AMENDMENT TO THE ADDRESS.

October 13. 1796.

THE session was this day opened by the Lord-lieutenant (Camden), with the following speech to both Houses of Parliament:—

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"I have His Majesty's commands to acquaint you that he has thought it necessary to require your attendance in Parliament at this early period, and to resort to your deliberative wisdom at a time when the ambitious projects of our enemies have threatened to interrupt the happiness and prosperity of his people by making a descent on this kingdom and Great Britain. And although His Majesty looks forward with the utmost confidence to the spirit, loyalty, and ability of his faithful people of Ireland, to repel such an attack, it will yet become your wisdom to neglect no precautions which may preclude the attempt, or secure the speediest means of turning it to the confusion of the enemy.

"His Majesty has been graciously pleased to direct an addition to be made to the regular forces in this kingdom by troops sent from Great Britain, the greater part of which are already arrived; and, in pursuance of His Majesty's commands, I have also encouraged the loyal and zealous disposition which has generally displayed itself, to associate in arms under His Majesty's authority, for the better security of property, and the preservation of tranquillity and good order.

"I have, at the same time, His Majesty's commands to acquaint you, that, in consequence of the steps which His Majesty has taken to restore peace to Europe, and to secure its future tranquillity, a way has at length been opened for an immediate and direct negotiation; and I am commanded to acquaint you, that it is his Majesty's intention to send a person to Paris with full powers to treat for the restoration of general peace.

"The apparently hostile dispositions and conduct of the court of Spain has led to discussions, of which I am not able to acquaint you with the final result; but, whatever may be their issue, they cannot but afford to Europe a farther proof of His Majesty's moderation and forbearance, and cannot fail to animate your utmost exertions in defending the dignity, rights, and interest of his empire against every aggression.

"In reviewing the events of this year, it must afford you the greatest satisfaction to observe that, by the spirit and exertions of His Majesty's navy, the commerce of this kingdom has been protected in a degree almost beyond example; and in no part more completely, than by the skill, activity, and bravery of the squadron stationed on the coasts of this kingdom.

"The success of His Majesty's arms in the East and West Indies has been highly honourable and advantageous to the empire, and evinces in the strongest manner, the valour and good conduct of his forces both by sea and land.

"The steady and dignified conduct of the Emperor, and the intrepidity and spirit of the Austrian forces under the command of the Archduke Charles, have given so essential a change to the aspect of affairs on the continent, as to inspire a well grounded confidence that the final result of the campaign will be such as materially to promote His Majesty's endeavours to obtain a safe and honourable peace for himself and his allies.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

"I have ordered to be laid before you an account of such articles of expence as are not included in the estimates for the current year, and which the present circumstances have rendered necessary; and when you consider the great interests for which we are engaged, and the objects for which we are contending, I doubt not that you will grant the supplies which may be requisite for them with your accustomed cheerfulness and liberality; and when the ordinary accounts and estimates for the ensuing year shall be laid before you, I trust you will then proceed with the zeal you have always manifested in providing for the exigencies of the state, and the honourable support of His Majesty's government.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"The expediency of the vigorous measures which you adopted in the last session of Parliament has been amply proved by those outrages which they were intended to suppress having in a great measure subsided. I am, however, to lament, that in one part of the country good order has not yet been entirely restored, and that in other districts a treasonable system of secret confederation, by the administering of illegal oaths, still continues, although no means within the reach of government have been left untried to counteract it.

"You will not fail, at a proper time, to continue your attention to the manufactures, the agriculture, and the commerce of the country, and to extend your accustomed benevolence to the Protestant charter schools, and the other institutions of education and

charity, which have been so long fostered by your liberal encouragement.

"The prosperity and resources of the kingdom, so highly improved by your meritorious care, still remain unimpaired by the pressure of the war; and I trust to your unremitting attention for the further advancement of your national prosperity.

"You have learned the steps which His Majesty has taken to procure the blessings of general peace upon a solid and permanent basis. Should these gracious endeavours of His Majesty not be followed by the success which he has every reason to expect, he is satisfied that the affections, courage, and perseverance, of his people, will enable him to frustrate the designs of our enemies, and to maintain the honour and dignity of his crown.

"It will afford me the highest satisfaction to be aided, at this important crisis, by your advice, and I rely with a confidence you have taught me to indulge, upon your liberal interpretation of my conduct, and upon that support I have so amply experienced since I received His Majesty's commands to repair to this country; and it will be peculiarly gratifying to me, if I should have the good fortune, in the administration of the King's government, to impress upon your minds the full extent of His Majesty's paternal care of this kingdom, and of my own anxiety to promote, by every means, its interests, its safety, and its prosperity."

Mr. Vesey moved the address, and was seconded by Colonel Bagwell.

Mr. Grattan objected to the speech: it contained no reconciling matter, no expectation of commercial benefits, and did, in a great measure, bespeak a false confidence in our resources both in commerce and revenue.

He lamented extremely that the outrages against the Catholics in the north had been so slightly dwelt on. He could not conceive that government, with all the powers it now possessed, should not have been able to quiet that part of Ireland; he heard the mob had a confidence in the lenity of government, founded on the sympathy of religion between the Castle and the Orange-men, and that the latter had, therefore, under the presumption of connivance, continued to commit most daring outrages. To suppose that government was inadequate to suppress this insurrection, when it has shown itself not adequate only, but unrestrained in putting an end to other insurrections, was to allow government more indulgence than it deserved. He did not approve of that expression in the speech which represented these raging atrocities in the north, as a disturbance not entirely suppressed. Such tenderness of language to such enormous practices against the poor and the industrious, betrayed an indifference in the government to the protection of the lower

orders of His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects. He was an enemy to equality of property, but a friend to equality of protection; and, in his opinion, the best method of preventing equality of property was to afford equality of protection.

He then proceeded to consider the subject of the war. He was extremely glad that the minister had sent an ambassador to Paris to apply for peace, partly because he did not imagine that he was capable of conducting the war, and when, by misconduct, war is rendered hopeless, peace is rendered necessary; partly because, for this country, in its present discontented state, a discontent the result of disappointment, peace, he believed, very eligible. He observed on the successes of the Austrians, which were as brilliant as they were seasonable; but he requested the House to consider the situation of the empire notwithstanding those successes; Italy conquered; the left bank of the Rhine at present in the hands of France; Savoy annexed; the Alps and the Rhine her boundary; the confederacy (the Emperor only excepted) dispersed; the Spaniard in alliance with France, probably at war with England; the British excluded from the ports of Europe; the fall of the funds; and the durable and consolidated state of the French republic; — this appears to be the case on the comparative view of the campaign. But what was our situation on the whole of the war? the loss of Holland; the deposition of the Stadtholder; the acquisition to France of the Belgic provinces, and a great part of Germany, accompanied with immense losses of men, and an increase of debt exceeding 100,000,000*l.* Having considered the minister's ill success, he begged to contemplate the powers which were wasted on him. Father of Mercy! what were they at the opening of the war? and first, all Europe, various in her views and various in her exertions; but there she was, with immense armies in perfect discipline, pouring on a single country in a state of complete anarchy; there was, beside the special exertion of the British empire, Parliament unbounded in its grants, unlimited in its confidence, and as patient as it was profuse, (bringing alternately to the throne, loan in one hand, and liberty in the other). There was the city of London, with her Amalthean horn; there was the landed interest with its fears, and the commercial interest with its confidence; there was the aristocracy with whatever it possessed of inert property and inert talent, loans, votes of credit, anticipations, indemnity following anticipations and following every encroachment on law, where Parliament had omitted to legalize by anticipation, encroachment on liberty.

There was also Ireland; poor, plundered, insulted, and forgiving Ireland! and though represented by certain minions as

"easily raised and easily put down*," pouring into the fleets and armies until she was forced to leave herself without a soldier for her ministers' ill-fated and wide-wasting West India expedition; where those ministers, by their plan and their delay, supplied the place of plague, pestilence, and famine. Loans granted more in one year than she granted to any one minister in the course of any former war. How they have requested is another question; in short every thing but her confidence. They had every thing from the two islands which an old country that was relaxed, and a young one that was ill-administered, could afford, (every thing in England but enthusiasm, and in Ireland every thing but the good opinion of the people; and all to send an ambassador to ask peace of the French republic!) and after such assurances of victory and of compensation: some of them he begged to repeat. They had said that this would be a brief and brilliant war; in the first year the French took Austrian Flanders, and drove the English off the continent. In the third they took Holland, and now Italy and both banks of the Rhine in the fourth year of this brilliant and brief war, which still continues, but with this difference, — that England, instead of being at the head of a confederacy, stands almost alone, and France, instead of standing alone, having given proofs that she does not want a confederacy, stands at the head of a confederacy, composed of the old allies of England, the Dutch and the Spaniard; and instead of defending Paris against the British minister, threatens these islands with the arms of her republic; or rather, instead of being partitioned by the kings of the earth, the kings (many of them are reduced to the state of petty princes) become tributary to her; that is, to a democratic republic now in appeal to their subjects against their princes, who are thus deposed in the opinion of their own people, and preside over nominal monarchies, but concealed and contingent republics.

This is extraordinary, but this is not so extraordinary as that the ministry beginning this war with such a prophecy, and conducting it to such a catastrophe, should yet have such confidence in the corruption of the constitution, that they should call on the politeness of the Parliament to thank them for the ruin of the empire. They did not confine themselves to one prophecy or one assurance. The minutes of the debates are scribbled over with monstrous tales of this sort; but on the finances, where they were more at home, the fallacy was more superb and magnificent. They had been guilty of the crime of inducing their country to continue the war by a false confidence in French bankruptcy; year after year had

* The expressions of the Attorney-general in the debate on the commercial propositions.

they stated that France was on the verge of bankruptcy, till the last year, when they pronounced her to be in the gulf; from that gulf issue five armies, one in Holland, two in Italy, and two on the Rhine, who drive the Austrians out of Italy, drive them a second time out of Italy, drive them in another part of the globe to the Danube; in the course of a few first months of the compaign fight twenty battles, conquer five crowned heads, and turn the English out of the ports of Europe; while poor England, with a group of dupes, her ministers, prophets, and financiers, standing as it were on the rock of public credit to see the fulfilling of her minister's perdictions, and enjoy the shipwreck of her enemies, she sees her allies dispersed, her funds, that old vanity, down drop, fathom after fathom, like a falling devil, until they tumble below that point of depression which at that very moment some of her administration had stated as the misery and reproach of the ministry of the American war.

See the difference! says an eloquent minister*; it is difficult to do justice to the beauty of his expression, impossible to do justice to its falsehood; see the difference between the well-regulated efforts of the surplus of capital, and the exhausting and extorted contribution of the capital itself! 100,000,000*l.* in the three first years of the war, the surplus of capital!! as well might you call the men lost, indeed murdered in this war, the surplus of your population. It is true, you have not fought with the whole of your people, nor their fortunes, nor their hearts; before they give you the whole of their population and property, you must give some share in your constitution, but you have given them a share in your disgraces and your debts, and have gotten from them such a share of their money as was not indeed sufficient to conquer the enemy, but entirely sufficient to exhaust the people. See the difference, says one of the ministers, between the effort of surplus and the contributions of capital; we open our eyes to see the difference, and the deception: previous to the falsification of this foolish prediction came out the fabrication of another. I know not what to call it, assurance or prophecy; soliciting an immence confidence in her resources, to arise from an immense exhibition of the increase of her revenue, viz. the growth of her trade, and the rise of her stocks. Scarce had he articulated, down went her stock, away went her allies, every port in Europe was shut against her trade, — Suabia, Bavaria, the Palatinate, the Popedom, her riches, arts, and antiquities, fall into the hands of France, to fill the gulf of bankruptcy; her armies, the children of the gulf,

* Mr. Pitt.

are in the plains of Lombardy; the ministers of England did not foresee this; they were thinking of finance; they had forgot contribution; they forgot conquest; they considered the resources of a great country in the spirit of a stock-jobber; they understood the ally, but not the war. Can you conceive any situation more calamitous than that of an unfeeling cabal, whom the people of England persist to tolerate as the ministry, assuring their country that the enemy was exhausted, being on the eve of efforts, on the part of that enemy, exceeding any thing before attempted by herself, or in the same time by any other nation; efforts which probably would not have been called, but for their fatal perseverance in a desperate war; a perseverance, the result of their assurances, and a despair, the result of their incapacity. I say can you conceive any thing more blasted than the situation of men making such assurances, except the same men, after the falsification of those assurances, and the refutation of their prophecies, coming back to the same body (who had been at once the dupe and witness of their fallacy), and to another body (who had been the witness of their fallacy and the subject of their insolence), to ask from both for sanction and support, that they may have fresh opportunities to repeat their falsehoods, and multiply their offences.

Let us suppose that every thing was misfortune, and nothing fault, and before we can make for ministers so favourable a supposition, we must be inspired by that spirit of truth which moved the King of Prussia, in his dealing with the minister, and the minister in his dealing with his colleague, and both in their dealings with Ireland. Supposing for instance, that it was necessary to have besieged Dunkirk, and proper for such a business to have divided the army, that it was wise to have added to all the other expeditions, that to St. Domingo; and, at a late period, with all the dilatory circumstances attending it, proper to have made the descent on Quiberon, after the suppression of the Vendeans, and that of Isle Dieu, after the defeat at Quiberon; supposing all these ridiculous suppositions, that is, allowing that the war was from the first desperate, and that the ministry were ignorant of its nature, and ignorant of their ignorance, giving the palm to their rival, who appears, on this supposition, less than a minister, but more than a prophet, and who obtained a victory over their understanding, before the French obtained a victory over their arms; allowing all this, and excusing all this, forgiving them their ignorance at the outset, what will you say of their falsehood in the sequel? why their false assurances? why accompany,

year after year, the failure of their projects by the boldness of their falsehoods? Why pretend the instability of the French government, when, according to this supposition, it were not only stable, but irresistible, and the English ministry not only unstable, but impotent; or if stable, only so from pliant majorities, which in the end may produce not only their instability, but their punishment. Why omit the opportunities of peace? Why, in 1793, when the French were driven out of Brabant? Why, in 1795, when they were driven from the Rhine? Why force Holland to begin the the war? Why force the Emperor to continue it? It is true they have indeed talked of peace, but in the manner of their overtures they evidently meant a popular dread, and a parliamentary period. But stating what I believe was true, that the ministry were not apprised at first of the difficulties of the war; that in the progress they were not equal to the conduct of it; that England had not fair play in their hands; that she had not a fair trial for empire; that the business was above them; that she was wasted and scattered, and spent, and minced in various mangled, miserable, and murderous expeditions; that the business was above her ministers; that they were weighed in the balance and found wanting; that, in addition to all these positive blunders, they did not discover one trace of genius, make one effort of talent, possess the merit of one noble failure; that she would have had a successful war, or saving peace, or a glorious struggle, if the late Lord Chatham had conducted the war; or, if the abilities of the present minister for war, were equal to his talents for debate; or, rather, if his stupendous talents for debate had not been matched by his equally stupendous and astonishing inability for war, and, in these times, for his situation; adding to this, that they had accompanied their constant failures with the most lively and false assurances of success, to delude their country to continue the war, necessary and just perhaps, if they had not rendered it hopeless; on this supposition, I say, what defence can be made; this defence only, that they have surrendered their system at last, at the expence of millions!

I ask whether this, their foreign system, is the only charge that can be brought, or made against ministers. I desire to know what has been their conduct to Ireland; their foreign system I have considered, and it is bad enough surely. What was their domestic? what their conduct to Ireland? This country is, if not the last, certainly the greatest card of the empire; every thing to the British nation here, is anxious in the extreme; here the new doctrine is

most formidable, because here the old doctrine has been most profligate and prolific; here the half-million for majorities has been proclaimed; here the best minister has been pronounced that man who bought Parliament the cheapest; here the profligacy of the practice has not fallen short of the theory.

The region this, the country and walk of the Lords of Buckingham and Westmoreland, and of the old court, for ages of peculation and plunder; here they had begun their system, by giving the administration of the government to the opposers of the constitution; here they had attempted to take back that constitution, by certain commercial propositions; here they had withdrawn the proffered trade, and swindled the revenue; here they had sold the peerage to buy the Commons. They had created at a stroke, in 1789, a new establishment of salaries, notoriously for that purpose; they had been, in the course of exercising a dispensing power, and disbursing money without the authority of law; they had robbed the Crown of its reversion; they scolded the people from the bar of the House of Commons; they had kicked their prayers after them; they had instructed grand juries to publish denunciations against the Catholics; they had then taken up the Catholics; they had then resumed the Protestant ascendancy; again they had taken up the Catholics, and again they had let them down; they had, in the progress of their defeat, promised a change of ministers and measures; they get a great supply; recal the minister for making the promises under their own authority, and tell the Catholics, whom they had deceived, that they must for ever remain disqualified for seats in Parliament, and offices in the state, for the better securing the Crown and the connection. The people petition; the ministry had answered their grants by disappointment; they then answered their petitions by fencibles. The army they had withdrawn when the French had threatened the country, and they pour it in, when the people petition the Crown. The leading Catholics, who had assisted in planning the petition to His Majesty, they had prosecuted without colour or pretence for high treason; the lower orders of the Catholics they gave up to an armed mob, to be exterminated with violence — triumphant in a course of years, and put them out of the protection of the law; they do this, when, by their misconduct abroad, they had reason to apprehend invasion at home, and when they had so reduced the army that they had left His Majesty's government no chance for its safety, but in what I imagine now must be its best security — the unanimity of his people.

If ever this country is lost to England, depend on it this system will be the cause. Lord Chatham had thought fit to unite the Scotch in the period of his victories; the present minister has thought fit to divide and degrade the Irish, in the hour of his defeats; in this their misconduct there was no foreign interference, no extrinsic misfortune; here the minister dominated all the events; here it was all their own bad conduct, bad sense, and bad manners. They could not govern the perfidy of the King of Prussia; admitted; but they could govern their own — their own perfidy and their own insolence; I conceive a minister who had governed ignominiously abroad, far preferable to him who had governed unconstitutionally; I wish to know whether the injuries the minister has done the empire could be stated to have been compensated by the services he has done the constitution; the bills and acts of power, the traitorous correspondence, gunpowder, convention, indemnity, insurrection bills, the prosecution of the leading Catholics, some of these bills necessary, others of them entirely unnecessary; and, where unnecessary, highly criminal; and altogether forming such a mass of power, as, coupled with the mass of influence in the Crown, make your constitution a vision. Here is the home system, — a system of influence, of coercion, and of proscription, with what effect on the public peace; the burning houses, the wandering families, and the violated offspring, and murdered parents of the northern Catholics, tell me that it has not been a system of peace; the declaration of the government that we must arm in county corps, in order to keep down insurrection; tell me that it has not been a system of affection; the foreign system has brought invasion to your door; the home system has destroyed that zeal and warm heart that should meet and repel him; under the influence of the two systems the cabinet meets; what cabinet? an ascendancy cabinet, under an Irish minister, sent here to throw out the Catholic bill, by a British minister, who recalled a Lord-lieutenant for proposing it!

Their difficulties are great; they are to persuade a people to make more than ordinary exertions, for less than ordinary protection; they are to persuade a people professedly proscribed from Parliament and the state, for the purpose of securing the Crown and the connection, to make voluntary, unusual, and enthusiastic professions of zeal, under that disqualification, for that proscriptive government; they are to persuade that people, who were told by some of your ministers that they must be, and whose King I fear was

told that they must be, ever disposed to subvert a Protestant government, though possessed of its privileges; to make without those privileges, voluntary enrolment under such minister, and under any person such minister should choose to appoint; they are to persuade those men whom they promised to make as tame as cats, such were the expressions, near the expressions, to become fiercer than subjects, and as fierce as lions, under the court standard of those who thus promised to make them tame as cats, and to ride rough-shod over them.

I approve much of those corps who adopted the true *original* principles of volunteer association, corps paid by themselves, and officers elected by the corps; honour to honour engaged, and freeman bound to freeman: such corps will be numerous, for they will be national. They are the true natural resident defence of the country. No minister can send them to the West Indies, and send Scotch or English *fencibles in their* place; but an ascendancy army will not do, a revenue army will not do, no more than church militants. You might as well, like the Pope, think of fighting your enemies by prayers, or as is done on Ash Wednesday, hope to disperse them by curses; or rather, as in this case, by one sect cursing another. Rely on it, ministers must reconcile, they must capitulate: it is not to them a new thing; they capitulated in 1793 to the Catholic claim. What great measure has been carried for this country but by their capitulation—the declaration of rights, &c. &c. &c.: nor can the English cabinet have any *qualm* on this occasion. The English cabinet have been of late years in the course of capitulation. They capitulated to America; they now capitulate to the French republic; and why not capitulate to Ireland? This country can only be saved by her own force; and her own force can only be procured by adopting the Catholics; and they can only be adopted by a total and entire change of maxims, measures, and manners, accompanied with a free and full participation of *whatever* privileges the constitution can boast; and, *what is infinitely* more essential, *whatever privileges the constitution intended.*

This is the force, the power, the charm, the staff of your saint, that will banish from your isle all noxious animals; the wand that opens the sea to the English, and will wall it up against the French. Quick, very quick; you have not a moment to lose; you have given your fellow-subjects a share of your taxes, your defeats, and depopulation; kindly, very *kindly*, give them now a share of your blessings, whatever *your* ministers have left you. Let us make *no more sacrifices* of our liberties: let us now sacrifice our *prejudices*; they will ascend in incense, the best use you can make of them—and

be a tiding to your God, that you are become a convert to your country.

Mr. Grattan concluded by moving the following amendment: "To represent to His Majesty that the best and most effectual measure we can recommend at this time for the support of Your Majesty's crown and dignity, and for calling forth the real strength and spirit of the country, is to unite the people of Ireland in a common interest, by adopting such measures and passing such laws as may communicate to all your Majesty's subjects the blessings and franchises of the constitution without distinction of religion."

Mr. W. B. Ponsonby seconded the amendment. It was opposed by Mr. G. Knox, Mr. Denis Browne, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Osborne, M. Alexander, Mr. Egan, Mr. Corry, Mr. Barrington, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Pelham, the Attorney-general (Mr. Wolfe), Mr. Archdall, Mr. Stephen Moore, Mr. Saunderson, and Sir Boyle Roche. It was supported by Mr. Duquery, Mr. Curran, Mr. G. Ponsonby, and Mr. Fletcher. They urged the policy of uniting all parties against the common enemy, and this could only be done by extending to all the privileges of the constitution.

Mr. GRATTAN in reply said: I have been told that I am at the close of my political life. I will borrow a few moments of that life to repeat the sentiment, and re-assert a claim dear to my heart, however reduced our number, however solitary our phalanx. It has been objected, that the Catholic claim should not have been made the amendment of an address. To such an objection, it is necessary to reply very little. Claims of right, liberties, and franchises, redress of grievances, and removal of abuses, naturally belong to, and, where Parliaments do their duty, are inseparable from addresses, prodigal and abundant with the offers of lives and fortunes. To the address under their consideration such claim more particularly belongs, because it contains a new and further offer of life, in the inrolment of corps, which, if exclusive, were wicked, and if inclusive, unless freedom should accompany arms, were hazardous. It particularly becomes those who were connected with Lord Fitzwilliam's administration to make the amendment, because the plan of Catholic emancipation was a part of their plan of county armament; and, lastly, it is peculiarly seasonable now to advance the claim of the Catholic to sit in Parliament, as we are on the eve of a general election, and the loss of this session is to the Catholic the loss of nine years. I do allow that precedents, where the rights and franchises of the subject were made any part of an address to the Crown, were of late years few indeed. Addresses of late were unconditional surrender, and unqualified submission to every minister, to any minister, and

to all ministers. However, in the perilous moments of the state, there were precedents in favour of the people; and, accordingly, in 1793, the throne came a little nearer the condition of the people; and the speech *in extremis*, recommended measures of reconciliation: nor should I have been surprised that the speech of this session had done the same, if the changes of war were not to the minister of these countries the change of sentiment. But now, instead of reconciliation, gentlemen called for unanimity without it; that is, for a parliamentary unanimity instead of a national one. There might be, and I have often been a witness to two unanimities; namely, an unanimity in Parliament for loans, for taxes, for penal laws, for rejection of petitions, and for the unqualified surrender of the life, fortunes, and liberty of the subject; but at the same time, without doors, an unanimity against those measures; unanimity for privileges, for emancipation, and for reformation; that is to say, unanimity within doors for the minister, and without doors, unanimity against him. Frightful unanimities these, founded on one side in folly, in fear, in influence, in the little motive, and the puny gratification in influences visible and invisible: founded on the other side in wounded pride, public principle, and public indignation; which left the minister too strong for the nation, and too weak for the enemy.

Gentlemen complain that the notes of this House are changed: I rejoice that the notes of this House are changed; you had lost the tone and nerve of a Parliament; and with them the confidence and the ear of the nation. Her high spirit sickened at the sight of her tame representatives, and she had retired from these walls in the disappointed mood of conscious pride, and inwardly had cried shame upon you! Devotion, prostration, deification, abominations — preferred in the way of worship to secretaries, and to the secretaries of secretaries: invective, obloquy, scorn, contumely, and vituperation, uttered against the subject and the citizen (the petitioner), had deprived the Parliament of the attention of the public, had revolted by its acrimony, and disgusted by its meanness. I wish much to accommodate my speech to the temper of majorities, provided I do not at the same time surrender my principles to their compliances, but at present it is impossible to go their lengths; and I should not give up a public cause, nor the zeal and fervour necessary in my humble opinion for its defence, in compliment even to majorities. I remember immense majorities on the rejection of the Catholic petition. I remember an immense majority for a perpetual mutiny bill, and, therefore, I would not bow to

majorities. I know of what strange and frail composition they may sometimes be constituted, and to what dreadful lengths they might be led, and had been in many instances led, from a want of thought as well as a want of principle. I must therefore prefer the interest of the nation to self-debasing majorities in Parliament, and console myself with her ear as my auditress, relying on common sense as the best judge of common interest, and standing by both in preference to any other authority.

Gentlemen have said, my observations were more suited to the French assembly than to the Irish Parliament. What may be suited to the French assembly they know but little; what may suit an Irish Parliament they know too well. They explain this, and say we have discovered to France the state of these countries. What! is not our shame public? The retreat from Dunkirk; the loss of Holland; the deposition of the Stadtholder; the loss of Brabant; the exclusion from the ports of Europe; the defeats in Italy, and the Dutch war? As to domestic proceedings, are they not equally notorious? The sale of the peerage; the creation of new establishments to purchase the Parliament; the plunder of reversions; and your intrigues with the grand juries to proscribe three-fourths of the people. The folly of this charge has been well touched by my honourable friend (Mr. Curran), who asks whether the Directory must come to this House to know that Brabant is annexed to France, or that Buonaparte has conquered in Italy? The principle of such an objection, therefore, is folly in the extreme, but the consequence would be ruin; for that objection goes to the suppression of all freedom of speech; and, in a debate on the state of the nation, desires that members may not touch on the calamities of the war, or the miseries of the empire. If, indeed, the ministry had only done a little mischief, then, indeed, it had been safe to condemn them, but when they have sunk their country, then the member asks for silence and support: he acknowledges the recital of their conduct to be a recital of national ruin; and he only desires that we shall conceal what we know to be notorious, and shall support what he confesses to be ruinous.

They mention the moderation of Mr. Fox. I am always happy when justice is done to a great and much injured name. I am happy that they bear testimony to his moderation. In victory it is perfectly consistent with superior natures to decline the triumph and rest satisfied with the conquest: but I do believe that Mr. Fox and Lord Chatham never concealed the offences of ministers, under the pretence of concealing the weakness of the empire. In March, 1795, Mr. Fox spoke on the state of the na-

tion, when he went at large into all the points, commerce, conquest, revenue, and resources. Lord Chatham, in the American war, expressed himself in one of his speeches from the poet: "But yesterday the name of England would have stood against the world — now lies she there." If a prophet had stood by his side, and had predicted that the day was not far off when the condition of his country would become so much more degraded, that, compared with it, the state of which he then spoke was meridian glory, what should he have said? His son had inveighed at the degraded and ruinous state to which Great Britain had been sunk under the minister of the American war; that lord may now come forth from his grave, and from that of the empire, and say, "Art thou become like unto us?" However, without further instances, it has been, and, as long as liberty lasts, must be the constant practice of Parliament, to state openly and fully the crimes of His Majesty's ministers, though connected with the weakness of the empire. Such statement makes no discovery to the enemy: they know the progress of your arms, the fall of your stocks, and the produce of your revenue; but the want of such a statement, the suppression of the public voice, the acquiescence of every man in the country under misconduct at home and abroad — that, indeed, would be to the enemy a momentous and very valuable discovery. It would prove that the ministry had conquered the people as the French had conquered the minister.

But if there was a language that could be called invitation; if it were possible for an Irish member of Parliament to invite invasion; if it were possible for a member of this House to give encouragement to France beyond all example or imitation, there was the member who had done it, the right honourable gentleman, the Lord-lieutenant's secretary, the representative of the English cabinet in Ireland, who had spoken as follows: "The exclusion of Catholics from Parliament and the state, is necessary for the Crown and the connection; that he is ready to meet the question now; that he was ready to support it with life and fortune." This dreadful, this deadly, this wild, and this fatal proscription, when he is calling for volunteers to enrol in the service! What language, what denunciation, what dictation could France have suggested more opportune in time, more pregnant in disaffection, or more authoritative in mischief? His practical logic has been, that in times of apprehended invasion, it is perilous to hold the language of reconciliation, and discreet to hold the language of proscription: eternal and indefeasible proscription! denounced by a minister of the Crown, speaking to

three-fourths of His Majesty's subjects. France knew perfectly well that she had gained Brabant, but she did not know till now that she had gained in the councils of the King of England that fatal partizan who, with the best intention in the world, could thus, in His Majesty's dominions, and from his seat in Parliament, recruit for the French republic. The member may rely on it the Catholic (the Irish), will not long submit to such an interdict; they will not suffer a stranger (amiable as the right honourable member may be, he is but a stranger) to tell us on what proud terms the English government will consent to rule in Ireland, still less to pronounce and dictate the incapacity of the natives, as the terms of her dominion, and the base condition of our connection and allegiance. We love the monarchy, and we love the connection, as compatible with, and instrumental to the preservation of Irish liberties: preferring our own liberties and our own people of all religions, to all things, and to all other countries. Rely on it, the ministry must retract that denunciation. I will hazard my credit that they shall retract that denunciation. They have not the madness, they have not the audacity, they have not the power to abide by it. I would appeal to their own country against them, and implore that her dearest interest, and, next to herself, her last strength, the physical force of Ireland, may not be lost to Great Britain by such abominable, unauthorised, senseless, and diabolic proscription. How much safer our plan of opposition, as you call it, our amendment of conciliation? the only principle of peace and of strength — with it you need not tremble at the sword of France nor the pen of Paine — without it you will become a prey to any enemy. "You will require," to use the words of Lord Bolingbroke, "neither the valour of Achilles, nor the wisdom of a Nestor, nor the eloquence of an Ulysses, to undo you; Thersites himself will be sufficient for the purpose."

It is of less moment to add a few observations to the objection of inconsistency. I supported the war, it is true; I now oppose the minister who cannot conduct the war; I oppose the ministry, who, giving up the alleged objects of the war, give no promising hopes of their capacity to negotiate a peace, and who are the less likely to conclude a peace with honour, because they have proved themselves incompetent to conduct a war with success. I now oppose a ministry, who, in the course of the war, had obtained from Ireland unparalleled support, and who had requited that unparalleled support by unparalleled duplicity, and had neither given equality to her trade, nor emancipation to her Catholics, — two measures sti-

pulated by *our* patriotism, and withheld by *their* perfidy. Further, the misconduct of the ministry in Ireland has added a new danger to the war; by their misconduct abroad they have, as they alleged, brought the enemy to your island; and, by their misconduct at home, deprived you of that real and warm heart, which should repel it; and have thus, by their disgraceful conduct abroad, and by their unconstitutional conduct at home, made it necessary to get rid of the administration.

I cannot sit down without expressing how little satisfied I am with the excuses advanced for neglecting the religious war of Armagh; government have not exerted all the powers which the law gave them. Have government dismissed any of the magistrates? Will government say they had no ground for so doing? Will government say, that in a year and a half, with 40,000 soldiers, and with summary laws, that would have enabled them to pull down the liberties of the whole island, that they could not reduce that county to order? I cannot but think the audacity of the mob arose from a confidence in the connivance of government; under an administration sent here to defeat a Catholic bill, a Protestant mob very naturally conceives itself a part of the state, and exercises the power of life and death and transportation, and murder and rape, with triumph; and, with the seeming sympathy of the court religion, the magistrates retire from the scene of action, except such as secretly foment, or openly encourage. The government at last comes forward, recites and classes all the outrages of the country, that outrage only excepted. The prudent mover of certain resolutions confined himself merely to those murders which are unpopular at the Castle, and provides such remedies as have nothing to say to the north. — The clause of compensation which promised some relief, is proposed and rejected; and at the end of seven months, are we surprized to find in such a government, that the violence which afflicts the Catholic has been suffered to continue? Protection and proscription are incompatible; the government that proscribes their privilege will not protect their person. There were other objections touching trade and revenue and the debt of the war, in which I fear I am right, but will not delay the night to discuss, save only to observe, that we had voted 5,000,000*l.* and the member tells us we had not paid off one, and the minister has called us together to vote more; so that his account and mine will differ but little. Nor is his state of the revenue more consoling, when it makes the revenue of this year less than the former, though composed of the full produce of the new taxes and the payment of the

arrearage of the old revenue. But whatever may be the difference of quantity, his conclusion must be mine, namely, that our exertions in this war have exceeded the ability of the country, or the gratitude of her administration.

The House divided on Mr. Grattan's amendment, Ayes 12, Noes 149; Majority against Mr. Grattan's motion 137. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Grattan and Mr. W. B. Ponsonby; for the Noes, Mr. Cuffe and Mr. Vesey. The address was then agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF THE HABEAS CORPUS ACT.

MR. G. PONSONBY OPPOSES THE SUSPENSION OF THE HABEAS CORPUS ACT.

October 14. 1796.

ON the preceding day, the Attorney-general, (Mr. Wolfe), obtained leave to bring in a bill, to empower the Lord-lieutenant, or other chief governor or governors of this kingdom to take up and detain all such persons as were suspected of treasonable practices. The bill was forthwith presented, read a first and second time, and committed for this day; and when the house resolved itself into the committee,

Mr. G. Ponsonby rose and said, were he even to stand alone, he would oppose such a measure; the members of administration were men of vindictive spirit, and he did not wish to entrust to them the personal liberty of the subject; they might apprehend any persons obnoxious to them, without giving any reason for such arbitrary conduct, and leave them to languish in prison as long as they thought proper. Ministers, he said, confounded the terms administration and government, and wished to represent all persons who opposed their measures as inimical to the King and the constitution; he thought there existed a great portion of disaffection to the present administration, but no treason so prevalent as to justify such an arbitrary measure, as the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. He concluded, by moving, that the chairman should leave the chair. The motion was opposed by the Prime-sergeant, the Attorney-general (Mr. Wolfe), Colonel Blaquiere, Sergeant Stanley, Sir Frederick Flood, Mr. Ormsby, Mr. Holmes, Mr. Ogle, Sir Edward Newenham, the Solicitor-general (Mr. Toler), Mr. O'Hara, and Lord Castlereagh, who strongly urged the necessity of the bill. It was supported by Mr. Duquery, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Curran, and Mr. Browne (of the college), who expressed his astonishment at the indecent hurry in pressing the bill through its several readings. He spoke strongly against the measure, and rather than be a party to such a proceeding, rose and left the House, declaring that he would not be privy to such unjustifiable and arbitrary acts.

Mr. GRATTAN said: The honourable member (the Solicitor-general) who has spoken some minutes before, has said, that we had assumed, with great arrogance and presumption, the office of introducing a measure for Catholic emancipation. I shall not apply such terms to the honourable member; they are unparliamentary and idle; but I may be permitted to say, that what has fallen from him has been rather frivolous and weak, though somewhat loud and very vehement. I had not assumed the situation of declaring the Catholic sentiments, but of advancing to the best of my power the Catholic interest; indeed, the national interest, for they are inseparable; but I beg to ask, whether the member has not been guilty himself of that assumption which he charged on others? The member had moved, in 1795, the rejection of the Catholic bill; the member has now come forward as the representative of the Catholic sentiments, and assures the House that at this time they are perfectly ready to come forth in support of the administration, without the privileges of the constitution, and notwithstanding the declaration of the secretary, that he is now, as before, ready and determined to refuse them. I incline to believe that the honourable member has no authority from them for making such a declaration; and it seems extraordinary that a gentleman should be made the confidential representative of their sentiments, who a year and a half ago was the ministers' confidential officer to propose a negative on their just pretensions. He is angry at our zeal of language; I am sorry for it, yet more, for the necessity of upholding such a language, even though it should displease him. I do not find that he answers the argument, though he finds it easy to rail against the expressions. Our argument has appeared to him in the shape of a giant whom he cannot encounter, and he is angry therefore. I assure gentlemen, there is nothing more I wish, than to accommodate my expression to the temper of the House, except in moments where a higher duty called on me to give offence to majorities; and, therefore, I laugh at the idea, at such a moment, of attuning my expression to the temper of administration, or even of the House. I speak not for them; not for the House, but for the country; by her sense I will abide against placemen and against majorities; nor shall I be induced, by any observation, to conceal the horror I entertain at their system, or abate the fervour of my mind, exercised to deprecate the continuation of that system with all the melancholy and alarming prospects which is afforded to the country.

I know of what majorities are composed, and on what frivolous motives, not to say more, they sometimes decide against the

best and dearest interests of Ireland. It was by resisting majorities, and immense majorities, that whatever this country had gotten, had been obtained; and those majorities themselves had come over to minorities, with recorded acknowledgment of error, and precipitation, and folly. A new reason has been advanced in support of the bill before you,—a most extraordinary one indeed. It has been said, that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus had been rendered necessary in consequence of the strength of the debate on the Catholic question. See the use to which this bill may be applied! to intimidate freedom of speech! to overawe members of parliament, speaking for the liberty of three-fourths of their fellow-subjects! What, then, will the condition of the citizen be; of the man who is no member, but who is not, therefore, in my mind, the less to be regarded? What will his situation be, under this law, if he gives offence to government, by taking a leading part for his fellow-subjects and his brethren? You have refused in your former sessions, under internal conviction of his guilt, to institute an enquiry into the conduct of a minister, and now you, without an enquiry, attaint the constitution.

Gentlemen ask, Do not you believe that there are treasonable practices in the country? The question shows how little they have considered the subject which involves the liberty of their country. The question is not, whether treasonable practices exist, for there was hardly any time in which such may not be said to exist in England, in Ireland, and in Scotland; but the question is, whether a treasonable conspiracy exists, and to a degree as to become dangerous to the state, and which, coupled with the alleged probability of invasion, renders the suspension of the Habeas Corpus necessary? But with respect to an invasion, that danger, for the present, seems removed; and as for the conspiracy, whatever opinions gentlemen may have, sufficient to ground a committee of enquiry, you have no parliamentary evidence before you at present to pass such a bill. The mover of the bill has not produced any parliamentary evidence to support it; he has stated the trial of Mr. Jackson, but then he very properly disclaimed what appeared on that trial as the ground of his bill. He mentioned the trial of the Defenders; but then he soon after very properly disclaimed what appeared on their trials as the ground of their bill; very properly, I say, because the trial of Jackson took place two years ago, and cannot be a ground for the hasty proceeding of last night; and, with respect to the Defenders, they are now quiet, and you did in their case, in the last session, pass certain laws as specifics, and they were pretty strong applications for that distemper.

The member then reduces himself to two grounds of

evidence; one is, the speech of the King, and the other ground that of the Attorney-general; that is to say, the minister's speech from the throne, and the minister's speech in the House of Commons; that is, on the evidence of the minister only, he attempts to suspend the law which was passed to secure the liberty of the subject against the minister. It is the right of Parliament to question every assertion of the speech. It is the right of the members of Parliament to say, if they think so, that every assertion of the speech is false; and yet, on the assumed infallibility of that speech, does he attaint the liberty of every subject in Ireland. Charles I. came in person to accuse certain members of high treason, and lost his head by the attempt. The minister in this case comes to Parliament to accuse the subject with general charges of treason, and the subject loses his liberty by the attempt.

The right honourable member knows he cannot stand on such evidence; he therefore attempts to supply it by his own. The Attorney-general's testimony comes in aid of the minister's testimony; the minister in one shape comes in aid of the minister in another shape, against the liberties of the people; and what is this auxiliary evidence? He tells you that there is a treasonable business in this country, the nature of which is a secret! Thus the minister of the crown, and the servant of the minister of the crown, are received by this house as complete evidence to assent to a bill in one night, indeed in a few minutes, that suspends for a year and a half the personal liberties of every man in Ireland. I apprehend they had in England a special committee, a very long and a very minute examination, and a very full report, before they attempted, a few years ago, to suspend the Habeas Corpus act. It was with all that precaution, a very bad measure, and they have accordingly discontinued that suspension in a country full of emigrants, and abounding more in treasonable practices than Ireland; but here the rapidity with which we demolish the liberties of the people is shocking. The member seems to feel the weakness of his witnesses, and endeavours to supply it by the passion of his friends, the other servants of the crown; and then, indeed, they, the servants of the crown, come forth with their declaration to bear out the minister in his declarations that there is a conspiracy; that is the minister still, in more shapes and in more forms; and country gentlemen catch the alarm, and are taught to fear so much about their property and their religion, that they give up the liberty of the subject for what they call the preservation of both. What is it you do give up? You give up the personal liberty of the people of Ireland, and you do this on such evidence as I have stated,

and in the course of a few hours. You give six privy counsellors with the Lord-lieutenant; the Lord-lieutenant without the privy counsellors; and the Lord-lieutenant's secretary, without either, to send to prison any man in Ireland. You give an Englishman, without residence or stake in Ireland, and, therefore, without responsibility, a power to send the Irish to Newgate of his own true will and pleasure, and you give him this power for eighteen months; that is, to the end of the next session of Parliament. Any active citizen, any offensive Catholic or Presbyterian, any friend to parliamentary reform and enemy to the abuses of government; any of that body against whose claims the secretary has declared himself a decided enemy, may, by that secretary, be committed to Newgate under any pretence which he may advance, without the smallest truth and without any responsibility; and you do this, you say, in order to preserve to your country the blessings of our excellent constitution!

As to your political liberty, the influence of the Crown seems to have corrected that blessing; as to your civil liberty, this bill, added to the bills you have passed last session, seems to correct that blessing also. By the influence of the Crown, the minister becomes the master of your legislature, and, by those bills, he becomes master of your person. Now, after this, where are the blessings of your constitution? You have deprived the subject of political liberty, and you now deprive him of civil liberty, lest he should exercise that liberty to reform abuses; lest he should use the liberty he has left in order to recover the liberty he has lost. I protest against the system; it is abominable; you feel it to be so, and take these measures of power, because you know the people cannot be reconciled to it but by power; because you feel you have lost the confidence of the great body of the people. Depend on it you must give up the system; you have gone on from bad to worse; from corruption to coercion; from the bills of last session, which were to have quieted the country, and which, the speech says, indeed, has in a great measure been rendered quiet by them, to this bill. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus, introduced on an assertion, that the country, so far from being rendered quiet, has, under the operation of your system, proceeded in some cases to a conspiracy to subvert the laws and the constitution. In your situation what would men of sense do? Give up that system, if it has had such a fatal effect on the public mind as to have produced not only general hatred in the great body of the people, but in some cases, as the preamble of the bill sets forth, treasonable conspiracy; why then,

you must change your system; you have force surely to provide for your immediate security, and for your ultimate settlement and final peace. You must heal. You must harmonize. You must reconcile.

The committee then divided on Mr. Ponsonby's motion, that the chairman do leave the chair; — Ayes 7, Noes 137; Majority 130.

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES A RESOLUTION RESPECTING THE ADMISSIBILITY OF ROMAN CATHOLICS TO SEATS IN PARLIAMENT.

October 17. 1796.

MR. GRATTAN, agreeable to the intimation he had already given, brought forward, on this day, his motion respecting the Roman Catholics, and spoke as follows:

Sir, —We have got clear of the domestic question. It is now made by government, a matter between the people of Ireland and the crown of England. It has been said on the rejection of the Catholic bill, by those who represent the British cabinet in Ireland, that the Catholics must continue under disabilities to sit in Parliament or hold offices of state, for the security of the connection and the Crown; *disability being* made by the minister the price of allegiance and connection. I submit that it now remains for the friends of both to reconcile, not the freedom of the subject to the connection and the Crown, but the continuance of both to the freedom of the subject.

I beg to consider for a moment how far the minister of the Crown, on the part of Great Britain, in her present situation, is judicious in making such a point. And, first, what are her colonies? where are the American dominions, her thirteen provinces? but of that no more. Her East India settlements indeed remain, and they are wealth most undoubtedly, but they are not population; still less her West Indies, which are, in the greatest degree, and of your best officers and soldiers, the constant and melancholy depopulation and death. What is she in Europe? Where is her confederacy? Where are the Dutch — will they join her fleet? No; they have joined the fleets of France already: they hate England because she preferred the power of a family and of a party to that of a people.

The Spaniard, will he join her fleet? No; he is in treaty offensive and defensive with France, and at war with England, and has joined the French already. The king of Prussia, will he fight for her? No; he took your money indeed, but he is at peace with France; prudent prince! and will scarcely harbour the British envoy! The Sardinian, he is at peace with France. Where is the Duke of Parma, the princes of Germany, the Prince of Hesse, and the Elector of Hanover? Such has been the end of her great confederacy; fear, flight, and evaporation. Now, let us consider who are her enemies: and, first, her old allies, in conjunction with her old enemy, new France, whose population, with its accession of territory, is more than 30,000,000 of people, opposed to less than 15,000,000 in these islands; one-fifth of which the minister proposes to disqualify; that is, in the end, to disaffect; and, of course, proposes to diminish in effect near one half of the population of the empire, at a time when she, from the comparative dearth of population, was obliged to subsidize all Europe, — subsidize the Hessian, subsidize the Austrian, subsidize the Sardinian and the Hanoverian. And when from the comparative superior population of her enemy, those princes are no longer permitted to take her subsidies, so that she had no resort but money, and now has no resort even there.

I beg to consider the treaties of Great Britain. On what are they founded? a dearth of population! What was her treaty with the king of Prussia? for 1,800,000*l.* the minister tries to buy 32,000 men of the King of Prussia: failing in that attempt, he proscribes 3,000,000 of subjects! "True it is, England is exhausted of men. True it is, England has been refused the aid of foreign powers by perfidy. Let us refuse ourselves the hearty support of native force by insolence." The minister makes a defensive league with a faithless ally; and he makes an offensive league against His Majesty's faithful and loyal subjects — with a strange and contradictory display of insolence and imbecility, with a paucity of men, and a prodigality of subjects, and with a catastrophical desperation that will lead him to his perdition, and his country to ruin. The ministry made also a convention with the Emperor, founded on the same principle, the want of population in the British empire. Without entering into the merit of these treaties, I ask what other excuse had they, save only a dearth of population; and whether a British ministry might overlook in their allies, diversity of religion, all kinds of enormities, fraud, and perfidy, gather up every vice on Christian ground, and ally and incorporate therewith? Forgive

the King of Prussia for the division of Poland; forgive the Empress the plunder of that country; forgive the princes of Germany the treaty of Pilnitz — because the English ministry were in a situation, or because they have reduced themselves to a situation, in which they must not presume to investigate the morals, religion, character, or conduct of their alliances; and shall they presume to set up an inquisition at home over the religion of their fellow-subjects, without a foot of ground to stand on in Europe? Driven out of every port, the minister, shall he exclaim, like a drunken toast-master, "None but stout Protestants!"

Having considered their treaties, I beg to know who are their allies? Protestant allies they have none: the American might have been more than their ally, now she is less. They have lost her warm heart by practices vile and abominable; they have lost her by their speculative tyranny; by a system of coercion followed up by a system of blood; and urged so far, and continued so long, as to leave in the breast of America an eternal alienation. The Dutch — they certainly are Protestant; but they are hostile. Her alliances are Catholic; and, so little does she regard religion in her allies, so little is she able to regard religion in her alliances, that she has made a league with the most holy empire, which is not only a part of the great confederacy, but is guarded in the Pope's person by British troops. The worship of the Virgin Mary, and the real presence, do not interpose an impediment to the framers of that confederacy. Such a pretence would have been laughed at between prince and prince, and is only resorted to when a league of power is to be formed by the prince against the subject. This league, made by the British minister with the Pope, on account of the French, and this league made by the same minister against the subject, on account of the Pope, hold out that ridiculous jargon of priestcraft and state-craft, which, in expression, is nonsense, and in practice is oppression. It states that the Pope is so innoxious, and even amical, that he may and ought to be included in a league of amity; and, at the same time, so hostile and poisonous, that the minister should exclude from the capacities of citizens, their fellow-subjects, on account of a connection with the Pope, incomparably less intimate than their own. They bring the great Catholic head of the church within the pale of their confederacy, and exclude the Catholic subjects from that of the constitution. They at once display the triumph of necessity over bigotry, and of bigotry over justice. They betray the sad symptom of a weak empire, but a tyrannic government; and, finally, they make a public and scandalous acknowledgment of the impudence and falsehood

of those arguments advanced by the ministers of a tottering empire to continue disabilities on two-thirds of our people, who have endeavoured to interrupt her downfall.

Having considered the minister's connection with the Pope, and his separation from the people on account of Popery — and, after considering who were the allies of England, I beg to know who are the component parts of the empire? I do not know whether Corsica would be *now* owned as such; but I recollect that the Corsicans are Catholics. Immediately before the ministry refused the blessings of the English constitution to the Irish, they gave them to the Corsicans, acknowledging thereby that the grant or communication of British privileges to Catholics, and on a better plan too than any Irish Protestant enjoys them, was not only consistent with the security of the connection, but essential to its formation. I would ask whether the Italians were more in love with that constitution, understood it better, were more acquainted with Magna Charta and the acts of the Edwards, or whether these acts were translated into the Italian language, that the minister should thus exclaim — "Liberty in church and state for the Italian, and perpetual incapacities for the Irish?" Whether the Italian understood the British constitution, I cannot say; but certainly the ministry do not understand the Italian disposition, nor ours. They gave to the Corsicans what they neither comprehended nor regarded, and refused that to the Irish which had ascertained their affection. They offer to an illegitimate and stolen connection what she rejects as an adulterous gift, and what, if bestowed to the partner of their fortunes, had procured domestic tranquillity. There are another description of subjects to whom the ministry had given the constitution of England, the people of Canada; and this furnishes another instance of the mockery and impudence of those pretences which presume to exclude the Irish. I now come a little nearer home, and ask of what was the national force in Ireland composed? Catholics most certainly. And so perfectly convinced do the ministry appear to be, that the Catholics, possessed of the franchises, would be attached to the Crown and the connection, that they thought it safe to give the Catholics arms without them. Above all, I beg leave to consider one part of the military force of the empire, namely, the brigade: to arm 6000 Irish Catholics for the brigade; to put them under the command of French Catholics; to select such as had been originally Irish, but had followed the fortunes of the house of Stuart, or were otherwise connected with the same, was, on the part of the ministry, the most absolute and complete triumph which

a Protestant government could obtain over all its prejudices. I approve of the measure entirely, because I am for giving the Catholics complete emancipation. I have no jealousy of them whatsoever; but, on the contrary, perfect reliance on them in the participation of all the franchises of the constitution, and no reliance on any part of His Majesty's subjects' hearty concurrence and support on any inferior conditions. But if there was any thing which I would have refused, it was that which the present ministry have given; viz. such an establishment as the brigade. I would have given them that too, and approved of it, because I would have given the remainder, because I am willing to give every thing which the government had refused. His Grace the Duke of Portland, if that was his measure, was perfectly right in procuring that: but it was because he was perfectly wrong in refusing the remainder. If I could conceive with the government that twenty or thirty Irish Catholic gentlemen sitting in this House endangered the throne, I should think I betrayed His Majesty if I proposed to arm a brigade of 6000 Catholics under Catholic and French officers; I do not arraign that measure, but mention it only to display the presumptuous inconsistency of adopting such a special measure of incorporation, and at the same time a general policy of exclusion; for either the minister endangered the Crown by the establishment of the brigade, or they insulted the people by the argument. And if it were possible to make the special incorporation dangerous, it was by accompanying it with the general policy of exclusion, which gives the strength, and gives the provocation; a policy not in the least new to the English cabinet. The injustice to the individual as well as to the community, by such a contradictory policy, I beg to observe on. It seems Catholic foreigners may have the command of regiments, and Catholic natives must not sit in Parliament; or rather, it seems that it is not Popery which excites the jealousy of ministers, but the people, the Irish people. Catholics are the objects of confidence, if they do not belong to the country; of trust and of alliance. The Pope is protected by the British arms; the Italian endowed with British privileges; French officers at the head of regiments; and this for the plain reason, that the empire is so beset and environed with difficulties, that she has not a latitude for exercise of bigotry and folly, except with respect to the people of Ireland. In what cause do the ministry allege the federacy are now fighting? — the cause of religion, monarchy, and empire. And yet does the ministry presume to disqualify the Irish catholics, who are at this moment fighting in that

cause (whatever it is); who are heavily taxed in that cause, and without whom the British navy could not keep the sea.

What is the British navy? a number of planks? certainly not. A number of British men? certainly not: no; but a number of British and Irish. Transfer the Irish seamen to the French, and where is the British navy? How comes it then that you trust that body to fight this cause, or call it what you please, in such a proportion, that their indisposition to you would be fatal; and yet tell these very people, after they have bled in that cause, that in a proportion in which they cannot be mischievous, and have every reason to be amical, they are to be suspected, excluded, and incapacitated? What is this, in other words, but to confess that the ministry are enemies to the popular part of the constitution in Ireland? That they very are willing to make use of the people for the purpose of the empire, and to abuse them for the purpose of the constitution; and, therefore, partly by penal laws, and partly by boroughs, they exclude from Parliament, for any purpose of real representation, the people of Ireland of all religions: considering the great power and united force of the enemy, considering the reduced force of the empire, whether her physical force in general, or the force of that description of men called navy, army, or militia, I do not hesitate to say, the preservation of the empire in the end must be decided by its unanimity, and that unanimity, if the minister separate the Catholics from the constitution, is by that separation rendered impossible; and, therefore, I submit this for the consideration of England, — that the minister who separates the Roman Catholics from the constitution, separates them from the empire. I beg to consider this question not only with reference to the empire but to the Parliament, for whose authority men affect so much anxiety; and whether a minister who endeavours to make it corrupt, is judicious to make it proscriptive except he means to invite and demand its reformation.

The bankrupt could sit in Parliament and tax the Catholics, though he cannot so easily tax himself; the persons who voted that the Parliament of another country could make laws for Ireland, can sit in Parliament; they may legislate in that body whose rights they surrendered. The persons who voted that the privy councils of both countries might interfere in your legislature, may sit in Parliament, and preside over the very privileges they betrayed. The men who bought the peerage, they may sit in Parliament; the man who sold your peerage, may sit in Parliament; he may be your viceroy, he was your viceroy; in short, Deism, Atheism, profligacy, and penury, may sit in Parliament, which is left

open to every imaginable crime by your laws, and studiously corrupted by your ministers. Look to your peerage, how many English and Scots are daily made your law-givers? Have you remonstrated against this periodical list, which the breath of a British minister qualifies to give law and judgment in Ireland without any connection with this country whatever? The persons who think they would be disparaged if their countrymen of large interest and Irish interest sat by their side, and whose empty vanity cries out, as against pollution; do they show any spirit on this periodical provocation? Look at your bench of bishops, one-half I believe English. If the people tolerate that inundation, shall not they tolerate the people?. May not the minister submit to have persons of Irish nativity and Irish interest sit in Parliament notwithstanding their religion, when the Irish submit to have Englishmen sit in both Houses, notwithstanding the absence of Irish nativity, Irish property, and Irish interest? If he insists that the English religion shall be a necessary qualification to sit in an Irish Parliament, he will teach us to insist that Irish interest shall be a necessary qualification also; in short, if the minister insists on a religious test, we must insist on a national one; and if it is held to be necessary for our connection with England, that Irish Catholics, of Irish property and interest shall not sit in Parliament; it is many times more necessary, (for what is of more consequence to us, than our connection with ourselves,) that Englishmen, though Protestants, having no Irish interest or property, should be banished out of Parliament.

I beg to know whether it is dangerous to trust Catholics in the state, and safe to commit the state to a set of jobbers? Whether it is dangerous to make a Catholic a peer, and safe to make the man who sold the peerage a viceroy? Whether it is dangerous to admit the Catholic in post of trust, and safe to trust the liberty of the subject to Scots fencibles and English commanders? Whether it is just that English absentees should be exempted from the taxes of the state, and the Catholics should pay the taxes and should not be entitled to its privileges? I beg to put this question,—are they a province to England? If so, let the dependance on the English government be the qualification; if not, do not make the religion of the Irish people the disqualification. These questions lead to a discovery of our real situation, namely, that we are a province in a mask, and that the English cabinet sits in the Parliament of Ireland, and is the Parliament, to the exclusion not only of the Catholics but the country. The idea that an English gentleman, on the part of the British cabinet, should come to this country to tell us that it is necessary for his country that we

should exclude ours, or a principal part of ourselves, is an insult so impudent, that it could only be tolerated, provided Great Britain had conquered France, and Spain, and America; and to import those who would export the natives, that is, exclude them from power and privilege in their own country, is a proceeding which the House will have, I hope, too much spirit long to submit to.

An argument is advanced to excuse their injustice, which I wish to repeat, more from its singularity than its strength; they tell the Catholics that the things they withhold are *nothing!* The patrons of boroughs, placemen, and pensioners, hold out this language, — that seats in Parliament and offices in the state are nothing, and that it is of no consequence to the Catholics to exclude all their leading men from the state and the Parliament. Suppose the minister should take these men at their word, and say to the placemen, you can have no objection, after your language to the Catholics, to support government without office; or suppose the reformer should now say to the borough patron, you can have no objection to the reform; a borough can be no object; or, suppose the Catholic elector should answer the candidate on the next general election, as he answers the Catholic here, I cannot vote for you, but you do not regard that a seat in Parliament is nothing; no; it is replied, these things are very great objects indeed, but they are only objects to us, who are in the habit of possessing them, and of monopolizing them. In other words, these men prescribe for these things as the old natural jobbers of the country; they demand all power and all place in consideration of the superior purity and disinterestedness of their religion; "Give us all the good things on earth, in the name of God, and in God's mercy give nothing to the rest of our fellow-subjects." Thus, this pure and pious passion for church and state, turns out to be a sort of political gluttony, an ascendancy hunger, a state voracity, an inordinate appetite for temporal gratifications in consideration of spiritual perfection; and, in consequence of this vile and mean, selfish and beastly monopoly, your state becomes an oligarchy, the worst species of oligarchy — a plebeian oligarchy.

I love the Protestants, I love the Presbyterian, and I love the Catholics; that is, I love the Irish: If ever my affection abates, it is when they hate one another. I approved of the British ministry when they liberalized towards the Catholics, and condemned that ministry in 1795, when it renounced its liberality and its honour, and returned to its barbarity, and employed Christian sects like hell-hounds, to hunt down one another. In consequence of this, they

have set up in Ireland a proscriptive state, a proscriptive Parliament, a proscriptive monarchy, a proscriptive connection; they have done so when the condition of the empire is in a great degree feeble, and that of the constitution in the last degree corrupt. Thus they make the empire feeble, and the constituted authorities profligate, and then propose to make them proscriptive; and do this when they are to encounter abroad not only the triumphs of arms, but of revolutions, as one way of defeating both, and setting them at defiance.

He then moved the following resolution, "That the admissibility of persons professing the Roman Catholic religion to seats in Parliament, is consistent with the safety of the Crown and the connection of Ireland with Great Britain."

The motion was seconded by Mr. G. Ponsonby. Mr. Knox expressed himself friendly to the Catholics, but, as there appeared no hope of carrying the measure, however desireable, and as agitating it without success would tend only to inflame, he thought it wise to avoid the discussion; he accordingly moved the order of the day; this was supported by Sir Boyle Roche, Colonel Blaquiere, Sir Frederick Flood, Mr. Archdall, Doctor Duigenan, Mr. George Ogle, Sir Hercules Langrishe, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir J. Parnell). It was opposed by Mr. Denis Browne, Mr. W. Smith, Mr. Duquery, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. G. Ponsonby, and Mr. Curran; he replied in a strain of great humour to Doctor Duigenan, whose speech was remarkable for its violent sentiments and expressions toward the Roman Catholics.

He said, that the learned doctor had made himself a very prominent figure in the debate. Furious indeed had been his anger, and manifold his attack; what argument, or what man, or what thing, had he not abused? Half choked, by his rage, in refuting those who had spoke, he had relieved himself by attacking those who had not spoke. He had abused the Catholics, he had abused their ancestors, he had abused the merchants of Ireland, he had abused Mr. Burke, he had abused those who voted for the order of the day! I do not know, said Mr. Curran, but I ought to be obliged to the learned doctor for honouring me with a place in the invective. He has called me the bottle-holder of my right honourable friend. Sure I am, said he, that if I had been the bottle-holder of both, the learned doctor would have less reason to complain of me than my right honourable friend; for him I should have left perfectly sober, whilst it would very clearly appear, that with respect to the learned doctor, the bottle had not only been managed fairly, but generously; and, that if, in furnishing him with liquor, I had not furnished him with argument, I had, at least, furnished him with a good excuse for wanting it; with the best excuse, for that confusion of history and divinity, and civil law, and canon law, that rollocking mixture of politics, and theo-

logy, and antiquity, with which he has overwhelmed the debate; for the havoc and carnage he has made of the population of the last age, and the fury with which he seemed determined to exterminate, and even to devour the population of this, and which urged him, after tearing and gnawing the Catholics, to spend the last efforts of his rage with the most unrelenting ferocity, in actually gnawing their names (alluding to Doctor Duigenan's pronunciation of the name of Mr. Keogh, and which Mr. Curran said, was a kind of pronunciatory defamation). In truth, Sir, said he, I felt some surprise, and some regret, when I heard him describe the sceptre of lath, and the tiara of straw, and mimic his bedlamite Emperor and Pope with such refined and happy gesticulation, that he could be prevailed on to quit so congenial a company. I should not, however, be disposed to hasten his return to them, or to precipitate the access of his fit, if by a most unlucky felicity of indiscretion, he had not dropped some doctrines which the silent approbation of the minister seemed to have adopted.

Mr. Curran said: he did not mean, amongst these doctrines, to place the learned Doctor's opinions, touching the Revolution, nor his wise and valorous plan, in case of an invasion, of arming the beadles, and the sextons, and putting himself in wind for an attack upon the French, by a massacre on the Papists; the doctrine, he meant, was, that Catholic franchise was inconsistent with British connection. Strong, indeed, must the minister be, in so wild and desperate a prejudice, if he can venture, in the fallen state of the empire, under the disasters of the war, and with an enemy at the gate, if he can dare to state to the great body of the Irish nation, that their slavery is the condition of their connection with England; that she is more afraid of yielding to Irish liberty than of losing Irish connection; the denunciation, is not yet upon record; it may yet be left with the learned Doctor, who, I hope, has embraced it only to make it odious, and has hugged it in his arms with the generous purpose of plunging with it into the deep, and exposing it to merited derision, even at the hazard of the character of his own sanity.

Mr. GRATTAN replied: To answer the learned Doctor (Duigenan), would be to go back into a former century, from whence he seems to issue, with whatever prejudice or bigotry were to be found in the most unenlightened and barbarous age; enough to tell him, if indeed any thing is necessary to say to him, after the plentiful and sinking measure heaped on him by my honourable friend's (Mr. Curran) reply; enough to tell him, that he totally mistakes the principles of human action at this day; that religious controversy, or the controverted points of religion, are a principle of human action no longer, and least of all the points in question, and which are renounced in the disqualifying oath, — the worship of the Virgin Mary, and the belief

in the real presence. I beg to know, whether the controverted points of religion are the principle of action that unite the present confederacy, or what was the present confederacy? The King of these countries, at the head of the Catholic powers of Europe, with the Pope among others, to restore monarchy in France, and eventually the Popish religion in full splendour. Why? because the British court do not fear Popery, but republicanism, and preferred a Catholic monarchy to an un-catholic, or to any species or sort of republic. The King of England is attempting to do in Europe, that which the minister falsely surmises the Catholics wish to do in Ireland — to restore Popery in full splendour; because religion is no longer a subject of alarm or dispute, and the dangers of Popery are lost in the dangers of democracy; and in order to guard against the success of the latter, he must give up his fears of the former. When, therefore, his Majesty is advised to proscribe that religion in Ireland, he is advised to depart from the present necessary practice of his reign, and from a fundamental maxim of his safety. I beg to know what was the cause of the American war? Was it religious controversy? No; but the principle of religious controversy was over-ruled and borne down by the principle of political controversy, power distinct from religion, and in contempt of it, of every principle of religion and of morals. Protestant England makes war on Protestant America for power, and Protestant America unites with Catholic France against Protestant England for liberty. There were men at that time who did idly and wickedly rely on the discord of religion, but they found that an oppressed people has but one religion, and that their religion is to turn out the oppressor. Let us come back to the present hapless confederacy. The British court wished to make America a party of it; but very far from being disposed by the similarity of religion to ally with England, America, under the influence of a degree of similarity of constitution, was disposed to ally with France. Let us turn to Ireland; in 1792, the minister endeavoured to detach the Catholics from their attachment to their franchises by the influence of their clergy, aided by that of some of their landed proprietors. What did the Catholics? It was a pious attempt on the part of our court to set the pastor against the flock. But what did the Catholics? They paid as little attention to the priest as they had done to the minister. What induced the minister of England to authorize the viceroy to promise the Catholic bill? Was it religion? No. What was it induced him to break his promise, and to refuse the Catholic bill? Indeed the religion of ministers would be only matter

of amusement, if it was not called in as a cheat to alienate three-fourths of the people. What induced great powers here to make up their consciences to vote for the Catholic bill with one administration, and made them change their consciences with the change of administration? Was it religion? No; they acted on the temporal, not the spiritual consideration, to keep their situation under one administration, to keep the monopoly of situation under another; disguising interested politics, as is common, under the false colours of religion. He said, that though religious controversy is no longer a principle of action, political controversy is one, and a very prevailing principle of action; a new spirit, the spirit of reformation has gone forth, and the objects of its wrath are, the abuses of the European governments, abuses in their churches, and abuses in their states; the proscriptive genius of their church, the despotic genius of their monarchies. In other countries it is the despotism, in these the corruption, of monarchical government that is complained of.

How ought you to oppose this new principle of action, and this spreading spirit of reformation? — by reforming and rejecting the abuses by which it is attracted. How *do* you oppose it? By increasing them, by allying with them; almost the only allies now left you are your abuses; by selling the peerage, creating nameless offices to purchase the Parliament, influencing the corporations, intimidating popular meetings, and making all the constituted authorities as corrupt as it is possible, and afterwards by making them proscriptive.

This is the method your wisdom suggests to quell, and baffle, and discountenance the present spirit of reformation. You make boroughs your constitution, and proscription your religion. To prevent the people from speaking on the subject, and to force them into clandestine meetings, you pass a convention bill; and, finally, to subdue the people to such a political constitution, you take away their civil liberty that might reform it; you accordingly suspend the Habeas Corpus for a year and a half, and take away the freedom of the person, with a view to guarantee the abuses of the state, and with an argument approaching to nonsense, and to something much worse than nonsense, that you must surrender the blessings of your constitution for their continuance and preservation. Thus, when you are to rally your fellow-subjects, they have nothing about which they can assemble. You may command their tame-duty, but where is the standard to kindle their enthusiasm? The Protestant ascendancy is no popular standard, venal boroughs none, nor a proscriptive church; no, nor a system of coercion; no, no more than the gallows!

The old sounds of our "most excellent constitution, and our most mild government;" the hackneyed chaunting of your addresses are so ground and ground, and strummed and strummed, that they have not the novelty or the fire to set the nerves of the weakest brain a dancing.

You must give the people to understand for what they are really contending, whether it is for a constitution which you profess to give, but do not give, — where the Commons may sit, and the community are represented; or for a constitution which you disclaim, but do give them — an English cabinet, a court majority, and a proscriptive establishment. How are we to combat the enemy? Namely, by the means by which she has defeated you — by the people. How are you to get the people? By privileges; not new and fantastic privileges, but the privileges you profess to give. What are they? They are the privileges which you refuse; the rights of eligibility, and the rights of election. Your bigotry has refused the former, your venal boroughs the latter. Do you imagine there is any man that would prefer the wild schemes of republicanism to the sober blessings of the English constitution, if he enjoyed them? What is the tree of liberty? It is sprinkled with the blood of kings and of nobles, some of the best blood in Europe; but if you force your fellow-subjects from under the hospitable roof of the constitution, you will leave them like a weary traveller, at length to repose under the shade of the dreadful tree of liberty. Give them, therefore, a safer dwelling, the goodly old fabric of the constitution, with its doors open to the community. You have thought another plan safer; you have thought proper to support the monarch, not on the principles of monarchy, but of corruption, and you have added those of bigotry; you support monarchy by kingcraft, and kingcraft by priestcraft; you support the King by the abuses of the state, and the abuses of the state by the abuses of the church; and while you think you are withholding reforms, you are the secret and unconscious ministers of revolutions.

I am sorry I cannot go along with you; I know not where you are leading me, from one strong bill to another, until I see a gulf before me at whose abyss I recoil. In it, I see no safety, nothing but the absence of our dearest rights; the absence of the Habeas Corpus act; the absence of civil liberty. The ministers of the crown seem of late to have resorted to the constitution, only to dig up the foundations of the buildings, and to pelt and overwhelm the people with the ruins of their own inheritance. Every session they come for new acts of power, and thereby confess the original error of their unfortunate plans of coercion and proscription; and they have

got so much unconstitutional power in law, that nothing is now further necessary but unconstitutional force; Scotch or English fencibles, instead of our native force, to enslave totally and entirely the people of Ireland.

Perhaps, if the business was to begin again, they would not undertake it; but it has become a question of passion as well as of power, and they are ashamed to adopt those plans which they wish they had never resisted. It is not, however, too late; they may yet recover the confidence of their country; but it is by a change of maxims and measures, and by adopting our humble offering. The best tribute we can make to our country and to the government; the plans of conciliation, which will place their strength upon a less paradoxical security than the enthusiastic exertions of a proscribed people; and the gratuitous and eleemosynary succour of an interdicted and an insulted community. Where are the petitions of the Catholics? say certain gentlemen. You kicked them out of the House of Commons. Where are the petitioners? they demand. They were so vilified on a former occasion, they are afraid to come nigh you. I am glad gentlemen now discover a disposition to pay respect to the petitions of the Catholics; formerly they abominated their persons, their petitions, and their claims; they now affect to respect their persons and petitions, and only direct hostility against their rights and liberties. If they wish for Catholic petitions, they are to be found in abundance; petitions of 1792 to this House; of 1792, to His Majesty; and of 1795 to this House, and of the same year to His Majesty again, all on the same subject. I do not imagine that they have departed from the objects of those petitions, and therefore, if gentlemen are ready to support their claims on a knowledge of their sentiments, they have that knowledge abundantly.

The Parliament has been assembled at this early period for the defence of the country; and, as far as granting away money, granting away civil liberty, and voting voluntary associations, were measures of defence, the country has been greatly defended; but as far as uniting, reconciling or animating their people, were means of defence, she has been entirely and most deplorably neglected; they have overlooked union, and remained satisfied with coercion. I do not believe there will be an invasion; if there were, I make no doubt it will prove wholly unsuccessful; but if there is the remotest chance of its success, that chance arises from the conduct of government. They have the less excuse, because, by this time, they must be perfectly apprised of the melancholy and extensive consequences of their measures. They have

found their project of armament rejected by the parishes of Dublin, and they have had recent proofs of the hatred of the north. They declared in the bill of the other day, that a conspiracy exists, they would suggest, in the north, and they accompany that information by proscribing the rest of the kingdom. To correct the evil consequences of such a system of administration on the minds of the people; they have resorted to the aid of certain Castle instruments, that might be termed the trumpeters of the constitution. These trumpeters, to advance their private and pecuniary traffic, proclaim the mildness of the government, and the blessings of the constitution; but their logic appears to be little more, than that in consideration of a mild government, you should suspend civil liberty, and in consideration of the blessings of our constitution, you ought to deprive three-fourths of the inhabitants of its franchises; in other words, that in gratitude for the blessings of the constitution, you are to surrender it to the crown. The sophism is extremely glaring, but profoundly wicked; it mistakes the constitutional checks on government, for the natural mildness of its character, and infers that we should give up those checks to fortify that government; it proposes to put down the constitution to strengthen the government, and then the people will reform the government to recover the constitution.

The House divided on the question for the order of the day, Ayes 143, Noes 19; Majority 124. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Ogle and Doctor Duigenan; for the Noes Mr. Grattan and Mr. Curran.

LORD LIEUTENANT'S MESSAGE.

MR. GRATTAN MOVES AN AMENDMENT TO THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE MESSAGE FROM THE LORD-LIEUTENANT.

January 17. 1797.

ON the 16th, Mr. Secretary Pelham delivered to the House a message from the Lord-lieutenant; and gave notice that he would, on the ensuing day, move the House to take it into consideration. The message contained the intelligence, that war had been declared by Spain, that the negotiation with France had been broken off; and that Lord Malmsbury had been obliged to quit Paris. It congratulated the House upon the failure of the

French, in their attempt to invade Ireland, and the providential dispersion of their squadrons, until His Majesty's fleet had appeared on the coast. It praised the zeal and alacrity of the regulars and militia, and the prompt exertions of the yeomanry; and likewise the distinguished services of the most respectable characters, in forwarding the measures of government; and the benevolent attention shown to the army by all ranks and descriptions of persons. It was this general spirit of animated and gallant loyalty, that inspired the just hope, that if the enemy had succeeded in an attempt to land, his career would have terminated in total discomfiture. The message concluded by stating, that His Excellency had not failed to represent to His Majesty this meritorious conduct of his faithful subjects of Ireland; and that he was expressly commanded to convey to them His Majesty's cordial acknowledgments and thanks.

On this day, Mr. Pelham (Secretary) moved an address to His Majesty for his gracious communication. The address was an echo of the message, except the last paragraph, which expressed the gratitude of the House for the continuation of Lord Camden in the government of this country, and their high approbation of his administration. It was seconded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell).

Mr. GRATTAN said: That the address comprehended a variety of subjects, on many of which there would probably be no difference of opinion, but to several he could not, for one, perfectly agree. That part, for instance, which related to the failure of the negotiation with France, and that relative to the conduct of His Majesty's ministers, so far as it concerned the invasion, would certainly not meet an unanimous approbation. With respect to the invasion, all would indeed agree, that the loyalty, the zeal, and the promptness of the country, deserved even more panegyric than the address bestowed upon it; but why then combine that question, on which all were agreed, with that of the question, whether the administration of Great Britain has been equally zealous in affording to Ireland the protection of the British navy? Why combine it with the negotiation for peace, in which the sincerity of the minister is at least questionable? He thought it, therefore, necessary to amend the address in these instances. He confessed, for himself, that he did not think the British minister was sincere in his negotiation; he might perhaps be wrong; but there were certainly many others who entertained the same opinion on that subject. He might, indeed have been sincere when he first proposed the treaty, because at that time the circumstances in which Great Britain stood, were to the last degree distressing. But when the tide of fortune was turned, and the valour of the

Austrians had driven back the French, there was reason to believe that the minister's inclination for peace ended. The manner in which the negotiation was commenced and carried on, evinced his insincerity.

Mr. Grattan drew a very striking picture of the inconsistency and incompetency of Lord Malmsbury's powers. Not believing, therefore, that the British minister was actuated by that honest and sincere desire for peace which the address asserted, he must dissent from it; for he never could degrade the dignity of truth, or wrong the reverence with which he approached the throne, by declaring to his sovereign, that he was convinced that was true which he believed to be false. He must also dissent from that part of the address which went to justify the British administration, in their shameful and criminal neglect of the defence of Ireland; which left the safety of this, the best limb of the British empire, to the accident of the wind, or the hazard of the storm. There was not a man in the country who did not cry out against their conduct, and there was not one who did not feel that they were lost to all concern for the safety of Ireland, when they left it to be a prey to its own distractions, or to be defended by its own valour.

Mr. Grattan dwelt long on this topic. Did the Parliament of Ireland pass by this flagrant dereliction of duty, and instead of enquiring, prop it up by a compliment? Ireland could never, in future, hope for the support of a British navy, however imminent might be its danger. Could it be said that the thing was impossible, that the English fleet should have prevented the descent of that of France, while her naval fame was boasted to be, as he was proud to believe it was, so much superior to that of its enemies? Or, was it impossible that the sagacity of the British administration, could find out the destination of the Brest armament when it was publicly talked of for three months before; when the Paris papers were full of it, and when they might have learned it from every prisoner which had been taken within that time; and yet with all this superiority of force, and such publicity of the destination of the French fleet, our coasts had been left for sixteen days at the mercy of its enemy! Where was the British navy during this period? Absent. To what had our defence been committed? To the wind. It was the more necessary to enquire into the cause of this neglect, because it was a common principle of action, an old habit of the British minister. In 1779 your army was sent away, and you had no naval protection from England, and yet then, as now,

you voted large sums, and poured out your population to man the fleets and armies of Great Britain. Your volunteers then, as your yeomen now, were assigned as your sole protectors! Two years back the British minister played the same game in Ireland; by a dispensing power he withdrew from the kingdom the troops allotted by law for your defence, and left you but 7000 men, and that too, at a time when you had no volunteers. Is this abandonment to be continued, and is it not only to be suffered, but to meet the positive sanction of the Irish Parliament? Will you for ever be ready to support the minister, and never to condemn his crimes? If France had been successful in overrunning your country, you should have looked for vengeance to the head of that minister. And will you now, when the winds of heaven have saved you from the destruction which he had been so near drawing upon you by his insolent, his contumelious, his criminal negligence of you and your safety, will you thank that minister for the *zeal* with which he has defended you? If you do, you lay a ground for distrust and separation from Great Britain, which may produce mischiefs you cannot foresee; you plunge a poisoned dagger into the bosom of your country, which those, who have stood up for that country in opposition to the abuses of its government, have been so often charged with doing.

Had Hoche and his 28,000 men landed in your country, and had reached Cork, even though he there met a final defeat, yet this event would have thrown back the prosperity of your country beyond calculation. Who would have been the cause of this? That Parliament, surely, who thanks him now for not having sent the British fleet to your protection, and who have ever been prompt to adulate, never to censure him. The British minister, culpable in any case for neglecting the safety of Ireland, becomes infinitely more culpable, when it is considered how much Ireland contributes to the support of that navy and of the empire, by her purse and by her people. What document, he asked, had the House before them, on which they could determine that the minister had not been culpably negligent? Did they wish to determine it as a rule, by which Irish services should be rewarded, that the more she gave, the less she should receive? or would they show to the people of Ireland, that its Parliament was and is in all cases, even where life, family, and fortune were at stake, equally on its back, for the British minister to trample on their neck? That they were equally servile in cases where public liberty, and where vital safety were concerned.

With respect to the negotiation, he again repeated, he did not believe the minister had been sincere. He was not surprised at the result. For what, indeed, could have been expected from a negotiation in which the negotiator went not commissioned by the allies to treat for a general peace, nor by Great Britain to treat for a particular one? If it were right for the minister to propose terms of peace, it was not right for him to propose fallacious terms. Mr. Grattan then stated, very forcibly, the absurdity of expecting that the French should give up Belgium for the insignificant consideration of St. Lucia or St. Tobago. I wish that the French could be persuaded or compelled to give it up; but he must be as drivelling a politician as ever bedaubed an address with panegyric, who could hope they would, in negotiation, agree to such a requisition.

But this requisition not only required France to give up all her acquisitions, but also to break faith with all her allies. In the progress of the war she had acquired several of these, and is related to them, constituted as they are; but had she ceded all her conquests, these must have been given up. Lord Malmsbury's demand, then, required France to verify all those charges usually laid against her of inability to keep treaties, and maintain the rational relations of amity and peace. Now, though the terms used by the English ministry be proposed in sincerity, they were such, as he must be sure the French nation, in existing circumstances, would certainly reject. It might be right and desirable, that the French nation be humbled, that Belgium, that Holland, that their acquisitions in Italy be wrested from them; but could that person sincerely desire peace, who would insist on the abdication of these as indispensable? The true state of the case seemed to be, the minister knew that peace was not attainable by him, and that he could not, without the utmost disgrace, conclude it. He, therefore, insists on terms which cannot be, and he knows cannot be admitted.

But even granting that this negotiation was a mere oblique measure, adopted to facilitate the obtaining of supplies; and granting that such a measure is justifiable by the pressure of the case, it still ought to be enquired, how came we into such extremities? If a minister, by a train of flagrant misconduct and incapacity, bring a nation into extremities that would render such a measure necessary, is it proper that Parliament should further him, and sanction similar measures? that they should not rather check him, and assume a part of the national direction?

Why should the Parliament of Ireland give him its sanction in all its measures? Why should the nation afford him a boundless confidence? He had no new ground of encouragement to present, no new bankruptcy in France, no new massacre there, to encourage our hopes.

And if he had topics of encouragement to hold out, what ground of confidence can he present? His assurances of the zeal of Russia, of the steadiness of Prussia, of the stability of Sardinia, have all proved fallacious; and after so frequent disappointment, will the nation yield him implicit confidence? Because he has lost the body all to a limb, must he be implicity trusted with what remains? Is our loss of so much in a vessel, the reason why we should commit the little remainder to the wreck? Without any reflections on the mental abilities of the individual, it may be asserted, that the minister ought, in wisdom, to pursue a peace, because his capacity is not calculated for conducting a war. Thus it would have been wise and proper in Lord Chatham, to have continued a war, in the same circumstances in which Lord Bute was in duty bound to court a peace.

But why did the minister refuse to make peace with France? Because the government is democratic. On this principle, the minister refused to treat with France in 1793. In 1796, he surmounts the objection of democracy, and sends an ambassador; but *he* is dismissed. Have we obtained any favourable change by the continuance of the war; or is a farther continuance more promising?

Still farther; what advantage can the minister propose from a continuance of the war? What assurance can he give, that he is able to prosecute it? No new loss has been suffered by France; no new gain has accrued to Britain. Can a desertion by all our allies, render us more equal to combat the enemy, than when all were on our side? Can they, when not only deserted by us, but thrown a weight into the opposite scale, augment our relative importance?

It is not, then, from any want of wish, that France be humbled, and that all her conquests be wrested from her; but from the imperious state of matters, and the obvious incapacity of the minister, that it appears proper to express a modest reserve with respect to his support in the prosecution of the war.

Mr. Grattan then proceeded to ask, what are now the objects of the war, in support of which we are called to pledge ourselves? At one time, the abolition of anarchy in France was alleged; afterwards the navigation of the Scheldt;

then the dereliction of Belgium was held out as the object; afterwards the restitution of Holland. Of these four, three objects are given up. The democracy of France can now be tolerated. The Scheldt is not longer enquired after; Holland is abandoned. The object now demanded, is the restitution of Belgium; and to exact this is impossible. It is for this impossibility that the war must be continued; for this the horrors of war must continue; for this the very existence of the nation must be hazarded. For these reasons I cannot agree to the address as it stands; and I accordingly propose the following amendment: "That we are deeply penetrated by the communication of acknowledgment of thanks, which His Majesty has ordered to be conveyed to his faithful people. They know not a superior duty than manifesting their loyalty to the best of sovereigns, nor can feel a higher gratification than in receiving the approbation of their faithful services; that we are deeply sensible that His Majesty's concern for the safety and happiness of his people of Ireland has been anxious and unceasing; that we shall think it our duty to take into immediate consideration, the steps that have been taken by His Majesty's ministers for the defence of the country; and, in the mean time, we cannot express our conviction of the sincerity of His Majesty's ministers in the late negotiation for peace with France, or give them the encouragement they solicit to continue the war."

The address was supported by Captain Pakenham, Mr. Pelham, Sir H. Langrishe, Mr. Barrington, Sir L. Parsons, Sir J. Blaquiere, Mr. Archdall, Mr. Egan, and Mr. Smith. They contended that Great Britain had made every exertion to send a naval force to Ireland; but it was impossible that it could have arrived sooner. Admiral Colpoys was in the harbour of Brest when the French fleet sailed; but the weather was so hazy, that the French got away unobserved. This circumstance prevented the Admiral discovering their destination. When the French got to Bantry Bay, the government sent the intelligence to London, and the adverse winds retarded the communication; but these adverse occurrences had been repaired by the loyalty, unanimity, spirit, and bravery of every class of people in the country — a spirit which had occasioned great joy and some surprise, as government scarcely thought that such a spirit and good feeling existed in the country. That the departure of Lord Malmsbury from Paris, and the breaking off of the negotiation arose from the conduct of the French, who now adopted a system of politics entirely unknown in Europe.

It was opposed by Mr. G. Ponsonby, Mr. Duquery, and Mr. Curran, who supported Mr. Grattan's amendment.

They objected to the address, inasmuch as it implied that the country should support the war, until France was brought to cede the Low Countries. This event was most improbable; the more so, as England was stripped of her allies, and is now almost contending for her existence. The conduct of the ministers with respect to the defence of Ireland, was censurable in the extreme. For three months before the French fleet sailed, it was publicly known that its destination was Ireland; yet the government waited till the enemy arrived, and then sent off for assistance. If Great Britain had assisted in saving Ireland, it was by a species of *invisible agency*. Mr. Ponsonby said, that on the subject of invasion, the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pelham), had dwelt with a species of ecstasy on the loyalty of the people, and the zeal and energy which they displayed in the defence of the country. He hoped that at last the eyes of government were opened; and they might see from this, that the best mode to pursue was to secure the good feelings of the people instead of goading them by unconstitutional measures.

The Roman Catholics in the south had shown their loyalty, and proved themselves worthy of being admitted to the privileges of the constitution. He rejoiced that the government had been taught this lesson and hoped they would profit by it.

Sir Laurence Parsons stated: That he had been witness to the zeal and loyalty of the people. In the march of the army, when the drifts of snow obstructed the artillery, the peasants laboured incessantly to clear the passage; furnished their carts and horses with alacrity; sharing their provisions with the soldiery, and offering their wishes and prayers for the success of the troops.

Mr. GRATTAN replied to these points, *the defence of the country, the overtures for peace*, and *the continuation of the war*. He said, a right honourable member had mentioned, that the defence of the country had not been neglected by the British ministry, and he has had the support, in that assertion, of a very respectable sea-officer. However, this House and this nation requires something more satisfactory. The French fleet sailed from the port of Brest on the 19th of December, came to Bantry Bay on the 22d, and remained there till the 3d of January, without any kind of molestation from the British fleet. It remained to be shown that this did not arise from any neglect in victualling, or from any cause but the weather; it remains to be shown how it happened that the ministry should not have known the destination of the French fleet, and have been so extremely ignorant on that subject, that one of them in his own paper is reported to have said, that a French fleet in Bantry Bay was the frenzy of idle report, at the very moment when they were actually there. He observed, that he did affirm, appearances were so strongly against the ministry in this case, that we ought at least to en-

quire; that we ought besides to know how we stood in point of internal defence when the French came to the coast; what number of troops, and what kind of troops, to oppose veterans; whether the ministry had not been for the last three years dilatory, and even criminal on this subject; it was the more incumbent on us to make such inquiry, as it had been the habit of the English court to neglect Ireland; this was the second war in which, within these fifteen years, she had been involved by England, and entirely abandoned; in the American war, the British ministry had taken away her army, and left her defenceless; and, in 1779, the Secretary informed the people of Ireland they must take the defence of the country into their own hands: hence the volunteers! in the present war, when an invasion was apprehended, and a considerable French fleet in those seas, the British ministry had taken away our army; and, though we had voted 17,000 regulars for our internal defence, had, by dispensing with law, left us not 8000 regulars in the kingdom: and now, a third time, have they left us without the protection of the British fleet, with raw troops, and to the accident of wind and weather for safety. He had called this neglect of Ireland, manifested in more instances than one, insolence on the part of the British ministry, growing into the habit of contumely, and resented every where in this country except in her Parliament. The right honourable member had objected to the expressions, but he was sorry he could not soften them: on the contrary, he believed it was useful, as well as just, to ring in the ears of the British cabinet such terms of reprobation. Happy had it been for them and their country that they had been less flattered by address, and more censured by Parliament. In the American war, had the British ministry been stigmatized as it ought to have been, what a delusion had been stopped, and an empire saved! But we flatter and deceive ministers until the mischief is done, and we find out the truth in the ruin of the empire.

With respect to Ireland, it is peculiarly necessary to speak to ministers a plain language; they have in general, with regard to this country, been saucy, and exercised an impudent contempt without any foundation in success or glory; we have taught them to despise us by despising ourselves, and made them forget that they were not now in a situation to despise any thing; this was owing partly to parliamentary, partly to personal meanness. The gentlemen of this country depend too much to a British cabinet, which, at the most flourishing time, was composed of men who, as fellow-subjects, were at best but our equals, and, at the present time, as very

mischievous fellow-subjects, our inferiors; and, even if we were to familiarize the ears of the Irish secretary to something much below dictation — if we were to fall less often at his feet, and to assert Irish superiority against his high pretensions more frequently, we should do him less prejudice, and ourselves more honour.

I beg to observe on that part of the right honourable gentleman's speech, which defended the sincerity of His Majesty's ministers in their late overtures for peace. The member had assumed that the French were insincere; and, therefore, he assumed that the English ministers were sincere; but might not they both have been insincere? Proofs of the sincerity of his friends were marvellously deficient. Not one, not a single one, has the right honourable member attempted to advance. He has dwelt on the ambition of France; much on the arrogance of France; much on her pride; and, as far as inveterate hostility and offensive language were proofs of a pacific disposition in those connected with His Majesty, he proved that disposition most abundantly. He states that the proposal of the British envoy did not go to the dissolution of treaties and engagements made already by the French republic; and Belgium, he said, was not connected by treaty, but by constitution. Is that a fair statement of the proposal? Certainly it did not go to a dissolution of a treaty which did not exist with Belgium, but it did go to the dissolution of those treaties entered into with other powers; with the princes of Germany; and also to the dissolution of all faith with the Italian states republicanized in concert with France. It proposed that France should pronounce herself to all Europe a country incapable of maintaining the relationship of peace and amity; and that she should surrender back to their old masters those extensive countries which she had detached from those masters. These were terms which only could be proposed to a conquered country; and, therefore, when such were proposed to France in her situation, it was a proposition of rupture, and not of peace. To prove this, it is only necessary to consider the *sine qua non* of the British envoy. He makes as a *sine qua non* of peace the surrender of Belgium, the annexation of which France has made a *sine qua non* of constitution; and which he was apprized to be so by her publication, declaring her sense and determination on that article of her constitution. He thus proposes, as a *sine qua non* of peace, a condition impossible, except it can be obtained by arms; and, therefore, proposes a rupture for the present, not a peace; and then comes to Parliament; and desires the benefit of two propositions — that in

proposing such a condition, he had a view to the balance of power, and had also a view to peace. In this proposal he had retracted the principle of his own basis. His basis proposes compensation; and when that principle is agreed on, he offers a few West India islands for a considerable part of Europe, including in that, a certain portion which the French Directory could not cede, even though adequate compensation had been offered. Thus, if an agent should for his employer offer 100*l.* for an estate of 1000*l.* a-year, and desire to be included in the sale a certain description of land which was under settlement and unalienable; you never surely could allow that he was sincere in the offer. The case is obvious; it was an object, when the Austrians retired to the Danube, to put matters in a train of peace; it was a great object to throw on France the odium of the war; it was an object, when the Austrians returned to the Rhine, to break off those overtures when the supply should be obtained; and the means were obvious — to propose impossible conditions. In truth, it is known that the situation of the ministry was such, that they could not make peace because they could not make war: they were so unfortunate in every campaign, that any peace they could make would have been disgraceful — would have been an acknowledgment of all their defeats — would have been their dismissal, and probably their punishment. They, therefore, suspended the evil hour by continuation of the war; they thought it better to try and gamble in politics a little longer. Their apology to-night has amounted to this, that they had reduced their country to such a situation, that they could not make peace; that they had lost every thing in Europe; that they were obliged to make certain political manœuvres that assumed a disposition to peace; but that they could not make any peace which did not sink England. This amounts to a complete practical confession of having ruined their country. Such has been, by their own acknowledgment, the event of the war.

A question naturally arises — how came they repeatedly to decline opportunities of peace hitherto? Why did they, under the repeated experience of their own failure and incapacity, persist in the war? A conduct justifiable in such a minister as Lord Chatham, is inexcusable in such a ministry as they are. In such a situation, a minister has only to go out, or to make peace; but here he is incorrigible in persisting to fight down the country under the pretence of seeking — what? — Indemnification for the past, security for the future! However, excusing this, which is going pretty far, why delude the country with false assurances? Why hold out the

faith of false allies? Why hold out the failure of French resources? The country may have an excuse for continuing a war for a certain time, from a confidence in the ability and the assurances of her ministers; but ministers must know their own insufficiency and their own fallacy. Passing over both, let us ask this question — What reason do they give that they will conduct the war with more success hereafter? What new resources? What new allies? The right honourable member has not thought fit to mention one: no; you have lost your allies, and have kept your ministers. You are to persist in the war with a view to recover Belgium for the Emperor, with one ally only, which Belgium you lost, though supported by the confederacy of Europe. In the defeat of allies; the diminution of resources, and the conversion of old allies into new enemies, does the gentleman find his only hope and resource? It is not stated now that France is in the gulf of bankruptcy; he is ashamed to retail that nonsense. It is not stated now that the French are proceeding to a state of revolution. It is not stated that Belgium is disposed to detach herself from the French republic, and go back to the yoke of Austria; we remember she twice shook off that yoke within a few years last past. It is not stated, suppose you could detach, how you could detain for Austria her provinces, liable to the inroads of France, and now without any fortified town. No; nothing whatsoever is stated to give any new hope on the subject: and you are, on the credit of past defeat, and on the assurance of discredited understanding, to throw after what you have little probability to recover, the relics which ministers have left of British empire. In making this opposition, and thus refusing to encourage the prosecution of the war, it was not that I do not wish to recover Belgium, but I do not wish to hazard Ireland. The minister is now gambling, not with distant settlements, or West India islands, but with the home part and parcel of the British empire. It has been said, will not you support England in the war? It is not supporting England in the war. It was said some time ago, will not you approve of overtures of peace? It is not approving of overtures of peace, but of the ministry playing tricks about war and peace!

Having relinquished the objects of the war then, and now all hopes and sincere dispositions towards obtaining a peace, and trying to suspend their destiny by making the situation of the empire as desperate as their own; I beg the House to consider, the question was not whether it was desirable, but possible, to recover Belgium; whether you are not more likely to lose part of what you have, than to recover

part of what you have lost. I beg to remind you, that as the old allies had fallen off, so new dangers had presented themselves; that it is no longer a question, whether you would be in Paris, but it was a few days ago a question, whether the French would not take Cork. The argument urged in favour of an address, encouraging England to prosecute the war, and founded on former support, is in point against that encouragement, for in fact, it amounts to this; you should encourage England to persist in a war, in which you have supported her with considerable damage to yourself, and with such effect on her as has not prevented the defeat of her allies and the ruin of her power. As the dangers of the war increase, its objects have vanished; the Scheldt, that is no more a contested point; the French republic, that is recognized. Holland, she is surrended to France, and her colonies plundered by England! One object only remains; Belgium, which, for any hope afforded by ministers, seems unattainable. All the objects of them are then given up by the ministry, except that object which they have no chance to recover. Those who vote for such addresses as this, do not appear to me to support the war, but the ministry in all their changes; who, whether they choose to treat with the French republic, or choose to acknowledge the French republic, or choose to make overtures of peace, or pronounce peace unattainable; equally meet with the same cry and the same support, and obtain the same confidence, or the same surrender of all judgment, enquiry, or check, on the part of Parliament. This country is the more interested to interpose between England and her fate, if Ireland were to partake of it. If she is to fall along with her, she should endeavour to prevent that fall; whereas, in the present case, she appears to me to join with the despair of ministers against the British empire, and to support, not that empire, but that cabinet against that empire, and, in combination with a set of ministers, to precipitate England, by the prosecution of a system which but this moment threatened the safety of one country and had near sunk the power of the other. If Ireland were the natural enemy to Great Britain, she should now enter with zeal in support of that system; she should endeavour to persuade Great Britain to spend more money and more men in pursuit of some object which she did not believe she could obtain, until her debt became so immense, and her continental influence so reduced, that she should cease to be a leading nation in Europe, and have in her own territory to encounter bankruptcy or revolution. The question before the House is not, whether this country should

go on with England in the war, but whether she should give her an extraordinary encouragement and exhortation to persist in it; whether we should say what we did not believe to be true, that we thought the ministry were sincere in their overtures for peace, and likely to be successful in the prosecution of the war.

The right honourable member * has, in the train of his speech, alluded to the yeoman corps, and has said that I have given that project but little assistance. The member is totally and grossly mistaken. That project was a measure of the administration of Lord Fitzwilliam, and defeated by the ministry to which that member belongs; it was planned and proposed to the English ministry in 1795, and was rendered abortive by that ministry, who thought it better to recal the Lord-lieutenant, and reject the Catholic bill. It was his friends who betrayed that government, and forfeited their own honour, that prevented the yeomanry corps at that time; who, had they then taken place, would have had this advantage over his project, that they would have been formed on a principle of constitutional communication and equality, without distinction of religion, instead of the sparing introduction of some few Catholics; and also with this other advantage, that they would have had the superiority of two years' instead of two months' discipline. On this same principle, I wished to extend the service, by proposing, at the opening of the session, the Catholic emancipation, a national communication of privileges, as the best ground-work for a national communication of arms. If there were any reserve among the Catholics on the first establishment of these corps, it must be attributed to the principle of government in the rejection of that proposition. The existence of such a plan is, therefore, due to his predecessors, the limitation and the procrastination of it, to himself.

The right honourable member has, with great truth and justice, entered into a panegyric on the loyalty, the services, and the zeal of those very Roman Catholics; and he has extended his praise very justly to the lower orders among them; we thank him; he does them no more than justice. It was on that conviction we thought it perfectly safe to give them the blessings of the constitution, and introduced a bill in 1795, for that purpose; in doing which, we, together with that ministry, were dismissed from power and consultation by the friends of the honourable gentleman, who sent him over to oppose that bill; which he did with so much success, as to throw out that bill, with a memorable declaration, that he would resist with

* Mr. Pelham.

life and fortune the clamours of the Catholics; those very people on whom he has this day poured out so just and unbounded an encomium. He answers the shallow charge of that servant of government, who said the Catholics, as long as they retained the feelings of men, could never be loyal to the House of Hanover, but must always wish for a Popish government, and the subversion of the Protestant religion. * Such a panegyric, coming from the minister, is not only a reprobation of the vile and impudent scurrility uttered by such servants, but it is, on his part, a recantation and a public renunciation of the justice of the proscriptive principle which brought him to this country; and it is also an involuntary, and therefore the more acceptable, praise of those men, who had the misfortune to be opposed by the right honourable gentleman in their endeavours to reward with privileges those subjects whose merits he has pronounced, though he has not as yet agreed to consider or reward.

I concur with those who express their wish to apply the attention of the House to the defence of the country; and one way of defending the country is, not to expose her; therefore I think it somewhat inadvisable to prompt England to prosecute her system of war, which had brought the French to our coast, without a fleet to oppose them. Another very natural way of defending the country, is to enquire what steps had been taken for that purpose, of defence, naval or military, for the last three years. We knew that, in point of fact, we had not been protected; we knew that, of the different fleets in different positions, none came to Ireland, though the French had left their harbour on the 19th of December, and had continued in the Irish harbour till the 3d or 4th of January. For this, it remains for us to demand a satisfactory explanation. It is idle to talk of defending the country, if you do not enquire into the conduct of ministers, when they appear to neglect it. Another way of defending the kingdom, is to unite her as much as possible; but that union is best to be procured, by giving the people what they justly claim; and the minister in this House allows they deserve rights and privileges. But a very different method has been taken in order to defend this country; and therefore it is that we are now to thank the wind and the weather. The method taken has been to sacrifice her privileges to her defence, and her defence to her ministers; that is, to sacrifice every thing to ministers, who appear to be more fortunate in defending themselves by a system of arbitrary laws against the constitution of the country, than in

* The Attorney-general (Mr. Fitzgibbon).

defending the country by the British navy against the French.

After a short reply from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the House divided (at one o'clock), when there appeared Ayes 7, Noes 90. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Grattan and Mr. George Ponsonby; for the Noes, the honourable Captain Pakenham.

CHANNEL TRADE.

January 25. 1797.

AT this period of time party politics ran very high in Ireland; the government had been not a little annoyed by the charges of bribery and corruption which had been brought against them in open Parliament, and which the most respectable members had pledged themselves to prove; the enquiry was, however, declined, and re-crimination was resorted to; the views of the opposition and their characters were traduced; the part they had taken in Lord Fitzwilliam's short administration was grossly misrepresented. The objects of the Roman Catholics, and their efforts to procure the restoration of their rights, were studiously calumniated, inside as well as outside the doors of Parliament; the speeches of a learned doctor in the Lower House, and those of a distinguished personage in the other, had contributed much to this species of warfare. Mr. Ponsonby, Mr. Curran, Mr. Grattan, Mr. Forbes, and Mr. Fletcher, were successively designated as persons, whose views and objects were dangerous and mischievous. To pass over such proceedings in silence was no longer possible; and, accordingly, on the question of the channel trade, Mr. Grattan took an opportunity to vindicate the character of the opposition and his own; and on this day he spoke as follows:

He said: It was his intention to renew, in this session, his motion relative to the channel trade; he would, however, postpone it for a short time, to give a right honourable member (Mr. Pelham,) time to endeavour to settle that question; that if the member failed, or did not speedily return, he would then make his motion. I am not to be deterred by calumny on that or any other subject. I have been assailed with much wild abuse. It has become so nonsensical and disgusting, as even to charge our party with having introduced the place and pension bill, with a view to disunite the countries. I beg to say, that the pension bill was introduced in 1785, when some of our party supported the government.

It was afterwards made a stipulation for the country in 1788, when that party expected to be the administration. It is but justice to state this in consideration of the worthy man (Mr. Forbes), who moved the pension bill, and who does not deserve to be traduced by such idle slander.

The place bill was introduced immediately after a declaration was made by a ministerial character (Lord Clare); viz. that it had been the practice of government to expend half millions for the purpose of buying the Parliament. It was made with a view not to disunite the countries, but to check such abominable practices, so indecently avowed, and to rescue government from the final mischief that must attend the repetition of such profligacy, and the shocking avowal of such profligacy. To say two such measures had separation in view is babble of the lowest kind. We are charged with endeavouring to disunite the countries, by proposing an enquiry into the proceedings adopted for the defence of Ireland. The best method of answering such slander is to state the steps which we took for her defence; namely, increasing her militia and her army, and proposing yeomen corps, which measures were defeated by the removal of the then Lord-lieutenant of Ireland, who found the country left destitute of army, of artillery men, and of arms, by the councils of those who exercised a dispensing power to take away the troops, and who now reproach him and his advisers with the crime of exposing Ireland to the French; had the measure of yeomen corps been adopted then, how different would have been the strength of the nation!

With respect to the Catholics, it has been charged, that their cause was taken up with a view to separate the countries, and to annoy the government; and that an English party wished to separate the two countries, and therefore had excited that measure. As a proof of the gross calumny and falsehood of such railing, we beg to observe, that no English opposition had any connection with the Irish Catholics when that measure was first agitated; that the Irish opposition had been applied to, to present their petition for the elective franchise in 1791, and without declining, dissuaded them from resorting to opposition, who could not carry their measure, but referred them to government; that afterwards their bills were proposed by the government, one in 1793, and afterwards another in 1795, by the succeeding administration, when the party itself were the government, not surely to annoy a government of which they themselves were the component part, but to accomplish in power what they had wished in opposition, and to serve the country at the hazard of their own dissolution. The folly of the charge goes so far from truth

as to expose itself to a chronological falsification; for it asserts, that the Catholic measure was resorted to after the place and pension bill had been carried, with a view to annoy the administration; whereas the fact was, that the first Catholic bill was passed before either place or pension bill, and the second was not proposed until the party itself became the administration. The charges founded on those grounds had been proved to be totally, absolutely, and shamefully false.

I beg to advert to the silly insolence of that charge which insinuated, that the language of opposition had invited the French to the common sense of this country. I appeal, whether language arraigning crimes, or the crimes themselves, — (and, as in the case of the half million, the unblushing minister proclaiming those crimes and proclaiming himself,) — whether a declaration that the Catholics must ever be hostile to a Protestant government; whether such practices and such declarations, or the speeches of opposition, tend most to inflame the country. It is not opposition, nor the language of opposition, nor public injury; but it is insult added to injury; it is both the injury and the insult, inflamed by a feverish and an idle tongue, and by the public nuisance of gross, petulant, and offensive manners; these are the circumstances that irritated the people; *the little penknife of the implacable pleader and his dirty quill, mangling his country's character; and her wounds, are best calculated to make her frantic.* In the same spirit of misrepresentation, it had been asserted, that the Catholics, save only in the instance of arms, were on the same footing with the rest of his Majesty's subjects, to which monstrous assertion, we make no other answer, save only to express our astonishment at its presumption. We have to lament that these notorious misrepresentations and railings, should have been accompanied with a revival of the old calumny — vituperation of the Catholic committee, vituperation of the Catholic convention, vituperation of the individuals of all sorts and degrees in a tart tattle, with a petulance, and a scurrility vile and vulgar as the charges were false and audacious, and with a plebeian monotony of abuse, well formed to vulgarise a senate, and traduce a country. What must be the froward temper of that part of government, which, when the minister of one House thanks the Catholics, even to the peasantry, shall revive old slander, fabricate new charges, and unbudget itself of a long and foul collection of petulance and folly? These shameful railings, when they are coupled with others against the north, denouncing at once much blood or more coercion, how imprudent, mischievous, and vicious!

Against such charges and statements, I beg to enter my protest, as opprobrious and pusillanimous, as arraigning past concessions, as tending to prevent future ones, betraying the fair pretensions of the country, disparaging for seventeen years back without distinction, all her exertions; as fraught with charges against the public and the individuals demonstratively false, and introduced with a lurking and dirty view, to flatter a British court at the expence of the Irish character, and conveyed in an unmannered strain of feminine intemperance.

Mr. Grattan concluded by saying, he would proceed with due speed, on a motion regarding the business of the channel trade.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said: That no man could attribute to him (Mr. Grattan) unfair motives, or those unworthy of a senator and an honest man; that as to the bills alluded to, he believed, so far from exciting discontent, they had tended to conciliate the affections of the people, and strengthen the connection between Great Britain and Ireland. And so far the right honourable gentleman and his friends were entitled to praise, but if gentlemen addressed themselves to the lower orders, and said they were ill-treated by government, such language would not produce good effects; the people were too wise to be misled. The measure now proposed, that of regulation, he conceived to be one most fit for the consideration of Parliament. Dr. Browne expressed his regret, that a difference of opinion on political subjects, induced, not in this House, but from certain quarters out of it, imputations of the worst kind. He felt a degree of loyalty, equal to that felt by any other gentleman, but he did not conceive that a difference of opinion with gentlemen in power, on any political subject was inconsistent with that loyalty; nor would he be deterred from speaking his sentiments, either in public or in private, by fear of any such imputations from whatever authority they might come, or however sedulously they might be propagated.

The order of the day was then called for.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

SIR JOHN BLAQUIERE PROPOSES TO RAISE AN ADDITIONAL FORCE OF 10,000 MEN, AND TO DEFRAY THE EXPENCE BY A WINDOW TAX.

February 22. 1797.

MR. MASON in the chair. Sir John Blaquiere, pursuant to notice, brought forward his proposition for raising an additional force of 10,000 men, to serve in Ireland, England, Wales, Scot-

land, and Berwick-upon-Tweed. He stated, that the reason he set forth the number of places in which these troops were to serve, was the injury which the service might sustain from an idea that the troops could be sent on foreign service to any other places, except to those which they had enlisted to serve in. He instanced the case of mistake that had been committed in sending troops to Gibraltar, who had engaged to serve only in Great Britain and Ireland. He proposed to defray the expence of this force, by a tax on windows, excepting houses that had only three windows, or that were exclusively employed for manufacture. He moved the following resolution, "That it was the opinion of the committee that 10,000 men should be raised in the several parishes, according to their population, to serve in the line (in addition to the regular troops and militia already voted), in Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, and the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed." The motion to levy the additional force was supported by Sir Henry Cavendish, Mr. Vandeleur, and Sir John Macartny, who proposed a tax of four shillings in the pound upon absentees, as preferable to the window tax. Mr. Pelham, Mr. Browne of the college, Mr. Alexander, Sir Laurence Parsons, Sir W. Newcomen, and Lord Castlereagh, argued for the necessity of the additional force, but differed about the mode proposed for defraying the expence. Mr. Ponsonby entered at large into the state of the country and the conduct of the ministers, whose culpable indifference towards the safety of Ireland he severely censured. The mode to preserve Ireland from France, was not by a loan of a million and a half, or by a pitiful tax on salt, but by efficacious measures — by reform, by emancipation, by equalization of commerce between the two countries; for on the measures now taken depended the safety of Ireland, and the existence of the British empire. He was strongly attacked by Mr. Ogle and the Solicitor-general (Mr. Toler). In reply, he stated, that it had been wickedly insinuated, that his opinions were those of a traitor; the tempest and hurricane of such a passion, and the coarse attack of the honourable member (Mr. Toler), could only excite laughter: but when the hour of danger would come, he hoped the gentleman who made the insinuation, would be as ready as he would be in the defence of their country. To charge men who differ from government with treason, is nothing new; it is the fashion of the times. That day he had seen a pamphlet, in which Mr. Fox is called a traitor, for advising peace; the state of the country proved the folly of the accuser. I despise it.

Mr. GRATTAN said: He had listened to the plans proposed by gentlemen, with much anxiety; and from all of them he had collected one great and evident truth, — that this country could only be defended by the people. He had clearly seen she could not rely on a British fleet; he comprehended she could not depend on a British army; he perceived that the Irish government had introduced their plans of defence, all of which gentlemen inclined to think feeble. He was informed

of the state of their funds and the difficulty of their levies; and, on the whole, collected that Ireland could be only defended by the people. It follows that you must become an armed nation and a military country; the situation of Europe has changed the nature of the defence; we are to be attacked, not by the army of a hostile country, but by armed colonies issuing from an armed and hostile nation; therefore we must adopt a defence proportionate to the attack; armed nation against armed nation, so that, though a battle were lost, this nation might not be conquered; I, therefore, think the best method is to increase the yeomen corps in a very great proportion; I wish also to increase the militia considerably; I cannot say I approve of the present plans, which made no considerable augmentation to either force, and almost only added to the army; a proposal had been made to add 10,000 men to the regulars, to levy them for general service by requisition, and to pay them by a window tax. The two latter parts of the plan appeared to be abandoned, and the first part remained for the consideration of the House, namely, to raise 10,000 regulars, in addition to the 30,000 regulars voted already. An amendment was made to restrain those 10,000 to the defence of Ireland. To that proposal I give my entire consent, and shall repeat the arguments urged against it with such answer as appears to me conclusive. It had been objected to the amendment, that the minister of England should not be restrained in the disposition of the army, because he was as much interested in the defence of Ireland, as in that of Great Britain; because he had always manifested as great an attention to the one as to the other, and had lately shown, in a particular manner, his anxiety about the safety of this island. It was added, that such a restraint was against a necessary prerogative, and that it was unknown in the practice of Parliament; and, in general, it was recommended as a safe and becoming conduct to vote the men and the money, but to leave the great object for which they were voted, namely, the security of the country, to the minister of the Crown. To this argument, in which there is so little either of reason or of dignity, I beg to observe, first, That the minister of England is not equally interested in the defence of this country as of his own. That the defence of his own must be to him a primary object; the defence of Ireland a subordinate one; and so it had always appeared, and so sensible of that was the Parliament of this country, that, in 1769, it disabled the Crown from disposing of 12,000 regulars out of the country; and so run the provisions in the great money bill ever since. And so unsup-

ported by the fact is that confidence, that in the year 1779 you were left without an army, and the then secretary informed the people that they must defend themselves. And in the years 1793 and 1794, your whole army almost was taken out of the kingdom, and you were left without arms, artillerymen, or troops of the line. In their stead you had new levies, which were not disciplined, nor armed, nor effective, nor on your establishment — and which were neither in substance or in letter, such troops as the provisions of the act required and described. As to the protection which this country had lately received from the minister of England, I have already given an opinion, which I believe was the general opinion of both kingdoms. On the experience, therefore, of so many years I would say, that the defence of Ireland was not to be left to the minister of England. I beg to add, that such a suggestion very much lowered the character of Parliament, and gave to the debates of the House a ridiculous and a servile complexion; that it amounted to this counsel, that we should grant every thing to the minister, and secure nothing to the country. As to the practice of Parliament, I beg to observe, gentlemen had been totally and entirely mistaken; far from being unknown to the practice of Parliament, the restraining the army to home defence of the country was adopted at the time of the augmentation, and it had been pursued in 1795; and you will find, in the resolution of the committee of supply, the House votes 8000 additional men, expressly for the home defence, to which the gentlemen agreed, who now say, that it is unknown to the practice of Parliament. Indeed the ministers of the Crown have often invaded the provisions of the acts restraining it on the disposal of the army, and for that reason I prefer the augmentation of the militia, and that force which, from its nature, could not be taken out of the country. He concluded with some general observations, touching the defence of the kingdom.

The House not agreeing on the mode proposed for defraying the expence of raising the additional force, Sir John Blaquiere withdrew his resolution, on the understanding that provision would be made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at a future day.

INTERNAL DEFENCE.

SIR LAURENCE PARSONS PROPOSES AN ADDRESS TO THE LORD-LIEUTENANT, REQUESTING HIM TO ADOPT MEASURES TO RAISE 50,000 YEOMEN.

February 24. 1797.

SIR LAURENCE PARSONS rose and stated the danger to which the country had lately been exposed; her inadequate state of defence at present; and the great hazard of defeat, in the event of an expedition from France effecting a landing. In 1794, although the French fleet had been beaten, yet the English fleet was so shattered that it was compelled to put into port. At that time the French fleet fought alone, now she had the Spanish fleet to assist her; she had ships also from Holland. He hoped the fleets of England would always be successful; but he could not forget that in the last war, they had fled from the enemy, and left the Irish shores unprotected. What saved Ireland? her armed population. This country must call forth its own powers. The reason the French had beaten the allies, was that the latter had not called out their population; they resorted to them too late. He conceived, therefore, that an armed yeomanry would be the best, the cheapest force, and most to be depended on. That 50,000 men would be sufficient; therefore he proposed the following resolution: "That a great and immediate armament of yeomen infantry, shall be raised for the defence of this country, in addition to the present forces of the kingdom, and that an address should be presented to His Excellency the Lord-lieutenant, requesting him to adopt speedy and effectual measures for the attainment of this object, the exigency of the present juncture requiring the most prompt and extensive system of defence." The resolution was opposed by Mr. Pelham (Secretary), Mr. Alexander, Mr. Barrington, Mr. Archdall, Mr. Maxwell, Sir Boyle Roche, the Prime Serjeant, Sir John Blaquiere, and Mr. C. Bushe, in a maiden speech. Mr. Pelham said, that the motion implied a neglect in the administration, as if they had not taken care to protect the country. Measures have been concerted with Great Britain, by which a large force would, in case of need, immediately be sent over. The people were zealous in defence of the country; they had shown themselves so on the late trying occasion. The honourable baronet had declared, that he had seen the people drawing with alacrity the cannon of his own battalion; nothing since that time can have changed their good disposition, or could have rendered the proposed measure advisable or necessary.

It was supported by Doctor Browne, Mr. Tighe, M. Jephson, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Curran, who said, it was clearly proved

that, in despite of the British fleet, the French could reach the Irish coast, and make good their landing. When they arrived in Bantry Bay, there were not 1000 men fit to oppose them. An individual of great wealth, residing near Cork, applied for leave to form a yeomanry corps; his request remained for three weeks unanswered. At length he got his commission, but received no arms for his men; and shortly after, the government wrote to know from him, how many of his men were fit to march against the enemy. There were other proofs of negligence on the part of ministers. The country must trust to its own spirit; this had been evinced to the satisfaction even of the government; they should improve that spirit, and show that they placed confidence in the people; and the best way to secure that confidence, would be to interest them in support of the constitution, by admitting them to all its privileges, and by acceding to the measures of reform, and of Catholic emancipation.

Mr. GRATTAN said: That from the vehemence with which the honourable baronet had been opposed, one would be led to imagine that he had proposed to diminish or disband the army or militia, instead of adding 50,000 men to the defence of the country. The honourable baronet says, it is necessary to face a victorious enemy with a large force, and make that force consist of the people. The English servant of the English minister says, "What! would you have me bid for the people?" I beg to say to the English deputy of that English minister, if he does not bid for the people, he had better leave this country. If he would not bid for the people; the monster of democracy, which had conquered Spain, Holland, Germany, and Italy, by bidding for the people, would bid for the people of Ireland. The bidding of the minister will then come too late.

He asks, who could be more interested for the safety of Ireland, than the British minister? He would answer, Ireland herself. To refer to the British minister the safety of this country, was the most sottish folly; it was false and unparliamentary to say, that the House had no right to recommend a measure, such as the honourable baronet proposed. Had it been a proposition to increase the regular standing army, it might perhaps have been a little irregular; but, when an increase of 10,000 to the standing army was proposed by a right honourable baronet the other night, it was not considered as an affront. Now, another honourable baronet comes forward to give an army five-fold as many, and five-fold as cheap, and administration are affronted. Why? because that army was of the people. If the doctrine

the right honourable member advances be true, and that the duty of Parliament now is become nothing more than merely to vote taxes, and echo three millions, when the minister says, three millions are wanted; then indeed *actum est de Parliamento*, it is over with Parliament; and a reform of the representation is become more than ever necessary. To that part of the right honourable gentleman's speech, which insinuates a design to change the militia of the country for that of England, he could not express his disapprobation of it with sufficient strength. It would be directly contrary to the principle of that institution, and would create suspicion and hostile sentiment, by introducing strangers in the place of native troops.

Sir Laurence Parsons replied. On a division there appeared for the motion 23, against it 125; Majority 102. Tellers for the Ayes, Sir Laurence Parsons and Mr. Grattan. Noes Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Charles Bushe.

VOTE OF CENSURE ON MINISTERS.

MR. PONSONBY MOVES TO CENSURE MINISTERS FOR THEIR NEGLECT OF THE DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY, ON THE LATE THREATENED INVASION.

February 27. 1797.

MR. GEORGE PONSONBY, in pursuance of notice, rose to make his promised motion to censure the administration, for their neglect of the defence of the country. If he wanted documents to support his charge, it was because the House had thought proper to refuse them; they contained the proofs, but the facts remained. His Excellency, in his speech of October last, acknowledged that administration had notice of an intended invasion. They should therefore have increased the force of the country, they should have demanded protection of the British navy. The French fleet that appeared on the coast of Ireland, consisted of sixteen ships of the line; that of Admirals Colpoys, and Bridport, made together thirty-one or thirty-two. The French fleet eluding the vigilance or negligence of Admiral Colpoys, came to Ireland. The admiral did not know where to follow them, and returned to Portsmouth; he was obliged to return in consequence of want of water; and, when Lord Bridport got ready, instead of going to intercept the French fleet on its return, he came off the Irish Coast. This

showed the mismanagement and negligence of ministers. As to the home defence, he was informed, that if 5000 men had been landed at Bantry, Cork would have been lost. Although administration had known three months before that a descent was projected by the enemy, they had neither provided troops, magazines, nor artillery; so much so, that if the army had marched to the south, they would not have had magazines, stores, or provisions for twenty days. The people had acted well; they were anxious to oppose the enemy; the minister had acted ill, who had not provided for defence. His object was to censure his misconduct. He therefore moved the following resolution, "That His Majesty's ministers are highly criminal, by the neglect and unskilfulness which they manifested in the provision, direction, and application of the naval and military force of Great Britain and Ireland, upon the late attempted invasion of this country, by the forces of France, in December last."

The motion was opposed by Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Howard, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell), Mr. Corry, Sir Henry Cavendish, Sir Boyle Roche, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Ogle, Mr. Barrington, Sir John Blaquiere, Mr. Rochfort, Mr. Osborne, and Mr. Smith. They stated, that the insular situation of the country, must expose her to attacks on every quarter, all of which could not be provided against; the admirals had done their duty, and it was fortune alone that favoured the attempt of invasion, — the adverse winds and weather retarded our naval operations. That the present was a party question to bring in one set of men, and turn out another; that the country would not be so safe in the hands of the former, as in those of the latter. The former stood pledged to repeal the convention bill, the gunpowder bill, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act; without which acts, the nation could not be safe. They were also pledged to parliamentary reform, and to Catholic emancipation, the discussion of which subjects would tend to inflame the people.

The resolution was supported by Mr. Curran, Mr. Fletcher, Sir Laurence Parsons, Mr. Hoare, and Mr. Grattan. They entered into a justification of their conduct. Their objects were to defend the country and conciliate the people; they thought it bad policy to incorporate abuses with the constitution; they had supported a measure proposed the other night for the internal defence of the country; they also stood pledged to measures in favour of the constitution, and the country; and from those measures they would not recede.

Mr. GRATTAN spoke warmly in defence of the resolution. The circumstance of the French fleet escaping two British fleets, riding triumphantly for seventeen days, and getting back unmolested, formed a phenomenon in the naval history of Great Britain which challenged enquiry. The plea urged in excuse, that the admiralty was not acquainted with the destination of the French fleet, was a great aggravation of the

neglect; though the truth of the plea was confirmed by the declaration of the British minister, that the report of the French fleet being off the coast of Ireland was nothing more than the phrenzy of common fame. He dwelt on the conduct of administration in refusing the papers which had been called for, and considered it as evidence of their criminality. He said the professional gentleman who had with so much zeal undertaken the defence of the admiralty, had unfortunately said little to the purpose. He had told the House that it was better for Lord Bridport to have sailed to Ireland than to Brest, when he learned the enemy had been on the coast; but that was not the disputed point; the charge was, why he had not sailed earlier? To some insinuations that he had opposed the yeomanry corps at their commencement, he said, he had opposed the first idea, which was, having them officered by government, and on a principle of religious distinction. These ideas he had opposed, and government soon became convinced that their plan in these instances was not practicable, and, therefore they gave it up. With respect to the general tenor of his conduct, he had not opposed any measure necessary for giving government sufficient strength to defend the country; and of that administration to which he had the honour, for a short time, to belong, it was a principle that Ireland should be put into a state of powerful defence. Had the measures and principles of that administration been adhered to, the House would not now be sitting night after night on peddling schemes of defence, nor would her resources become dependant as they were on clymosynary offerings. Was it the gentlemen of opposition who sent away the artillery? Was it they who sent away the regiments of the line, or, stripped the regiments who remained of their flank companies? No; if their advice had been followed, those troops would now have been in the country, and the country itself would be invulnerable. He agreed with the honourable gentleman, who said, that if the opposition came into power, they would be bound to give the people the measures they had promised, and, among these, a reform in Parliament. But, that gentleman had gone beyond the truth when he asserted this measure would throw open the way to French government; it was one thing to have a full and fair representation, and quite another thing to open the government to the madness of the French politics, unless gentlemen would say that the people were so sick of the constitution, from the vices which had been bred and cherished in it, that they would prefer French legislation to the constitution of

England. If gentlemen said so, they went further to give a powerful stimulus to the French than any opposition could ever do.

Mr. Ponsonby spoke in reply; and the question being put, the motion was negatived without a division.

ABSENTEE TAX.

February 28. 1797.

THE House resolved itself into a committee of ways and means. Mr. Vandeleur said, the tax he meant to propose would afford a considerable supply; but, that this advantage would be nothing compared to the benefits which would result from the policy of the measure. In 1773 a similar proposition had been discussed, and had been lost only by a majority of fourteen. At that time Ireland had neither trade nor independence; but now she possessed the spirit belonging to both; which he hoped, would make her act in a manner becomming her high situation. They had taxed the poor who resided: — they should now tax the rich who preferred absence from their country, to residence in it; and who evaded those taxes which fell on the poor and the resident. He did not mean to say they should compel the absentees to reside in Ireland, but they should be compelled to contribute a certain quota of expence, which, in justice, every man owed, and was bound to pay to the society of which he was a member. He estimated the produce of the tax at 150,000*l.*, being two shillings in the pound on 1,500,000*l.*, the rent-roll of the absentees. As to the policy of the measure that would be great; the absence of landlords was the cause of the disturbances that had taken place in the country for half a century; had checked its growth and disgraced its character. By their absence, the country was deprived of their authority as magistrates, as landlords, as masters, who would reward the industrious, repress the disorderly, and thus remove the spirit of discontent. The interest remitted to London in January last, was 181,000*l.*; since that, the country had agreed to borrow and pay an interest of 272,000*l.* We should probably have 400,000*l.* interest to pay at the Bank of England, and if the war lasted, the country must look to an annual remittance of 6 or 700,000*l.* Those remittances added to that occasioned by absentees, would raise the annual drain to two millions. The annual balance of our trade only amounted, in the most prosperous year of peace, to 1,500,000*l.* Such a system must in the end prove ruinous. Therefore in some degree to avert it, he would propose the following motion; "That it is the opinion of the committee, that a tax of two shillings in the pound should be levied on all rents belong-

ing to persons who should be absent from this country, more than six months in each year; persons holding naval or military situations abroad, being excepted."

The motion was opposed by Colonel M'Donnell, Mr. Cavendish, Mr. Alexander, Sir Boyle Roche, Sir Frederick Flood, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell), Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Marcus Beresford. They said that the object of the motion was to acquire popularity, and would prove mischievous in its effects; it was a partial tax and it restrained the natural liberty of the individual. The absentees contributed to the support of the country, but not to such an extent as those individuals who resided. The measure would prove injurious to commerce, by destroying confidence; and if the principle of the measure was followed up, a sequestration of absentee property should follow the present proposal. Lord Castlereagh said, that this was not a proposal for a tax but a penalty; it was an attack upon property. England protects Irish property, and we are going to attack English property; if it was not for this intercourse of property, the King of England, might, perhaps, now be negotiating with the King of Ireland. Discussions such as these, produce injurious consequences, and go to the separation of the countries; for they bring into question the policy of the connection with Great Britain. It required more experience and wisdom than a young member (the mover) possessed, to ascertain the injury which such discussions would produce.

Mr. GRATTAN said, it was too late for him to go at large into the debate; and he would only reply in a few words to such arguments as appeared to him most material. It had been relied on that a tax on absentees would diminish the value of land, on a supposition that it would drive out of the market a number of purchasers; the answer to this argument is the fact; which is, that there are not, and have not been for a long time, any absentee purchasers at the market; it follows, that the value of your lands is not to be affected by them, and that the objection had arisen from the ignorance of the fact. It is added, that when the removal of the absentee purchaser from the market, where he is not, shall have sunk the price of land, then, induced by its cheapness, capital will be drawn out of trade to be laid out on land; should that be the case, the consequence must be, that the value of land, from the multitude of bidders, would rise again, and the evil be remedied by itself. Gentlemen suppose a fact which does not exist; and then they suppose a consequence which cannot exist; and if it did exist, would cure itself. He observed on the folly of that surmise, which supposed that bringing back a considerable quantity of absentee capital, either by revenue or residence, would diminish the capital of trade. It was saying that the operation which increased capital, would have

the effect of diminution. It was added, with the same improbability, that the tax was impracticable, or that it was impossible to tax the absentees; to which it is not necessary to make any answer, except that it would be collected as easily as any other tax; and it is further to be observed, when, in 1773, such a tax was proposed, the men of business in this House not only supported the tax, but one of the most eminent stated the plan for collecting it. Still more paradoxical is it to say, that the tax is unseasonable at a time when you are raising taxes exceeding 300,000*l.* a-year, and borrowing 3,000,000*l.* and have had resource to a tax even on salt, a desperate experiment on the poor, under the excuse of necessity. Compare, then, the practice of gentlemen and their argument, and the amount of both is this, that it was necessary to impose a salt tax on the poor, because government think it unseasonable to impose an absentee tax on the rich; so it is said, with almost as little reason, that an absentee tax leads to a land-tax, which is to suppose that you will bring about a land-tax by removing the necessity of it. It has been added, that this tax leads to a separation. This, like the other objections, was mere assertion, unproved and improbable, and, like some of them, absurd, distracted, speculations, urged against common sense and common interest. He asked, whether they thought that England would refuse to send her fleet to guard Ireland on account of the absentee tax? Whether on that account she would refuse to guarantee the loan? It was ourselves, not England, or rather our ministers, that asserted that such a tax would be considered by England as leading to a separation; far from it, we should find the old policy of England to have been a tax on absentees, with a view to compel their residence, or their contribution, for the purpose of preserving English interest in Ireland. Gentlemen had produced instances of the like; he could produce two more; one in the reign of Edward I., the other in that of Edward IV. The principle of such an objection as that which supposed the tax led to a separation was this, that if the Parliament of England did not at all times sacrifice the interest of Ireland to that of England, it advanced to a separation; which argument leads more than any thing else to a separation, and is at once so insulting and degrading, as to make the connection a perpetual pretence for opposing measures of advantage to Ireland; that we had been advised to reject this tax in order to pursue the principle of conciliation; conciliation with whom? the absentees, or the people. It is very remarkable, that, speaking of conciliation and mildness, we should proceed as if we had no people whatever; and

provided we pleased the court, or that body whom the court espoused, we accomplished every purpose of harmony, though we at the same time laid every possible tax on the poor, to avoid the necessity of taxing the rich, and offending the minister. The great and most extraordinary objection to this tax was injustice — injustice to make the absentee contribute to the protection of his property! It would be hard to prevent him from leaving the country, or taking his property out of it. But if he left his property to be protected by the country, he ought to pay his share of that protection. This was not punishment for non-residence, but a tax for protection; but there was, on the other hand, the highest injustice in taxing the resident Irish exclusively for that protection, and making residence at the court of London, or in the seat of empire, an exemption against contribution to the state; and this was doubly unjust now when you resorted to the poor Irish for a salt tax, because you would not face a minister, and resort to the wealthy Irish for an absentee tax; when you suffer court favour to be a protection against the exigency of the state, and not poverty. It is that kind of justice which chooses to burden poverty rather than riches, and prefers the interest of another country to your own. He did not enquire into the merits of the absentees, for the tax is not punishment for a crime, but a tax for protection; he knew several of them, and loved several of them. So did he love the resident Irish. But what has that to say to a tax imposed for protection?

He concluded by observing that government should be ashamed to tax the poor, as they have done this session, in tea, in sugar, and in salt; and to show, at the same time, such favour and affection to the rich, who were countenanced by government, as to leave them untaxed, because they lived in England, and had more weight with the minister than the people of Ireland.

The motion was supported by Sir John Macartney, Mr. *Smith*, Mr. Curran, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Fox (*afterwards Judge*), Sir Laurence Parsons, and Mr. Henry Butler. It was contended that many of the evils under which the country laboured were occasioned by the absentees. Such had been the opinion of Sir John Davies, in the time of James I.; since that time the evil had increased. The rent-roll of Ireland is about six millions, and of that near 1,500,000*l.* belonged to absentees. Such a system was contrary to every principle of legislation. When the country was invaded, these men were not to be found; they left their property to be defended by those who resided; and to that protection, it was but fair that they should be obliged to contribute. The opinion of some of the ablest men that Ireland had produced,

was in favour of such a tax. Mr. Malone, Mr. Pery (late speaker), and Mr. Flood.; the measure was not new, it had been proposed before, and had nearly been carried; and, so far from its tending to separation, as had been said by a noble lord (Castlereagh), there were two acts passed in England upon this very principle; one in the reign of Richard II., by which two-thirds of the profits of the lands of certain persons should be paid to the Crown for not residing on their estates in Ireland; another in the time of Henry VIII., passed for the same purpose; and in the preamble of which it was stated, "That much ruin, desolation, and rebellion, had arisen in His Majesty's realm of Ireland, by lands in that country having fallen to persons not resident within the same." Here there was not a tax but a forfeiture. If the measure was a popular one, it should be conceded to the people, to secure that confidence of which the government stood so much in need. In reply to the allusions of Lord Castlereagh to Mr. Vandeleur, he observed: "It is insinuated, that it is presumption in a person of my age and experience, to propose to this House a measure of such vast importance. I must confess, I do not possess the same advantages of political education with the noble lord (Castlereagh). I well know, the Castle is a hot-bed, which ripens the understanding and matures the judgment. It has so completely eradicated all prejudices from the mind of the noble lord, that I am unable to perceive whether he speaks the language of the minister, or deputy minister of the English cabinet, or that of the representative of a great, populous, and independent county, which, by great and manly exertions, ushered him into this House on the shoulders of popularity."

The question being put, the committee divided; for the tax upon absentees, Ayes 49, Noes 122; Majority against Mr. Vandeleur's motion 73.

GENERAL LAKE'S PROCLAMATION.

DISARMING OF THE PROVINCE OF ULSTER.

March 20. 1797.

ON the 16th, Mr. GRATTAN called the attention of the House to a subject which deeply involved the peace and safety of the country, and was in itself a complete subversion of the constitution. He alluded to a paper which had been published by General Lake in Belfast, which went to substitute military government for the law of the land; and committed the lives and property of the King's subjects to the discretion of the military.

He gave a general statement of the contents of General Lake's manifesto. He could scarcely believe that this paper had been published with the countenance of ministers. It was a measure leading to such momentous and dreadful consequences, that he would not suppose the minister was chargeable with it, until he should avow it; he should wait, therefore, until he received an answer on that head, before he proposed any specific measure.

Mr. Pelham said, if General Lake had published any paper, or taken any step which Mr. Grattan thought deserved the notice of Parliament, he had it in his power to bring the subject before the House, and take their sense upon it; at present it could not be supposed that he should give a direct answer as to the authenticity of a loose paper which the right honourable gentleman had not even read to the House.

Mr. Grattan replied, that he had extracted the document from a Belfast newspaper, which he had this morning read: he had read the date and signature of it, and could not at that moment read the whole, from the weakness of his sight. On Monday, therefore, in order to bring the matter fairly before Parliament, he should move for a copy of that publication, and also for such orders and instructions as had been given to General Lake, relative to that measure. On the 17th he accordingly moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency, praying that he would be pleased to order that a copy of a paper published in the Belfast News-Letter, and purported to be signed by General Lake, be laid before the House; as also a copy of the instructions of government on that occasion to General Lake."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer observed, that Mr. Pelham had declined coming down to the House this day, in the idea that no public business would be transacted. His absence, together with the thinness of the House, would, he hoped, induce Mr. Grattan to postpone his motion.

Mr. Grattan agreed to defer his motion till next day, but gave notice that he would repeat it then, preparatory to a motion for enquiry respecting the aforesaid publication on Monday.

On the 18th, Mr. Pelham (Secretary), delivered to the House the following message from His Excellency:

"CAMDEN.

"The dangerous and the daring outrages committed in many parts of the province of Ulster, evidently perpetrated with a view to supersede the law, and prevent the administration of justice by an organized system of murder and robbery, have

lately increased to so alarming a degree in some parts of that province, as to bid defiance to the exertion of the civil power, and to endanger the lives and properties of His Majesty's subjects in that part of the kingdom.

"These outrages are encouraged and supported by treasonable associations to overturn our happy constitution.

"Threats have been held out against the lives of all persons who shall venture to discover such their treasonable intentions. The frequent treasonable assemblage of persons, and their proceeding, by threats and force, to disarm the peaceable inhabitants; their endeavour to collect great quantities of arms in obscure hiding places; their assembling by night to exercise in the practice of arms; their intimidations, accompanied by the most horrid murders, to prevent His Majesty's faithful subjects from joining the yeomanry corps established by law; their having fired on some of His Majesty's justices of the peace, and threatened with murder any who should have the spirit to stand forth in support of the laws; which threats have been recently exemplified; their attacks on the military, by firing on them in the execution of their duty, have so totally bid defiance to the ordinary exertions of civil power, that I found myself obliged, by every tie of duty to His Majesty, and of regard to the welfare of his faithful subjects, to provide for the public safety by the most effectual and immediate application of the military force entrusted to me.

"I have accordingly ordered the general commanding in that province to dispose of and employ those troops under his command, with the assistance and co-operation of the yeomanry, to suppress those outrages, and by seizing upon all arms and ammunition, to recover such as had been traitorously taken from His Majesty's troops and others, and more effectually to defeat the evil designs of those who had endangered the public safety.

"I have the satisfaction of informing you, that by the firm and temperate conduct of the general and the troops under him, and the zealous co-operation of the yeomanry corps, a very considerable number of arms has been taken; and I am encouraged to hope that a continuance of the same vigorous measures will give confidence to the well-disposed, and restore to the civil power its constitutional authority, which it has ever been my wish, and shall be my strenuous endeavour to support with energy and effect.

"C."

The following is the proclamation above alluded to in the message, and addressed to the people of the province of Ulster:

"*Belfast, March* 13. 1797.

"Whereas the daring and horrid outrages in many parts of this province, evidently perpetrated with a view to supersede the laws and the administration of justice by an organized system of murder and robbery, have increased to such an alarming degree, as, from their atrocity and extent to bid defiance to the civil power, and to endanger the lives and properties of His Majesty's faithful subjects. And whereas the better to effect their traitorous purposes,

several persons who have been enrolled under the authority of His Majesty's commissions, and others, have been forcibly and traitorously deprived of their arms; it is therefore become indispensably necessary, for the safety and protection of the well-disposed, to interpose the King's troops under my command; and I do hereby give notice, that I have received authority and directions to act in such manner as the public safety may require.

"I do therefore hereby enjoin and require all persons in this district, (peace officers and those serving in a military capacity excepted) forthwith to bring in and surrender up all arms and ammunition which they may have in their possession, to the officer commanding the King's troops in their neighbourhood.

"I trust that an immediate compliance with this order may render any act of mine to enforce it unnecessary.

"Let the people seriously reflect, before it is too late, on the ruin into which they are rushing; let them reflect on their present prosperity, and the miseries into which they will inevitably be involved by persisting in acts of positive rebellion; let them instantly, by surrendering up their arms, and by restoring those traitorously taken from the King's forces, rescue themselves from the severity of military authority. Let all the loyal and well-intentioned act together with energy and spirit, in enforcing subordination to the laws, and restoring tranquillity in their respective neighbourhoods, and they may be assured of protection and support from me.

"And I do hereby invite all persons who are enabled to give information touching arms and ammunition which may be concealed, immediately to communicate the same to the several officers commanding His Majesty's forces in their respective districts; and for their encouragement and reward, I do hereby promise and engage that strict and inviolate secrecy shall be observed, with respect to all persons who shall make such communication; and that every person who shall make it, shall receive as a reward the full value of all such arms and ammunition as shall be seized in consequence thereof.

"G. LAKE, Lieut.-Gen.
"Commanding the Northern District."

On this day (the 20th), the House resolved itself into a committee of the whole House to take into consideration the message of the Lord-lieutenant. Mr. Ogle moved an address to His Excellency, stating their conviction of the necessity of the measures resorted to. Its import was similar to the message; and it concluded by pledging the House to a cordial co-operation in the measures adopted by the government for disarming the north of Ireland.

Mr. Grattan observed, that the worst news he had heard of late, (and he had heard much bad news of late,) was the message from the Lord-lieutenant, attainting one entire province of Ireland of high treason. Parliament was desired to assent to that attainder forthwith, and to put the province of

Ulster under military execution. We were called to do this without enquiry of any sort; and, without the delay of a moment, we were called upon to do that with respect to the most flourishing part of our country, which could not be done in the case of an individual; we were called upon to attaint a *people*; to attaint a *people* for high treason, on the charge preferred by a *minister*; we were called upon to do this without evidence, enquiry, trial, or the delay of a moment; to proceed against our own country with less justice or ceremony than were observed by the revolutionary tribunals of France. An Irish Parliament was called on to take the word of a minister, and on that word to attaint their country of treason. Who are the people whom they attaint of treason, and consign to military execution? They are the men who placed William III. on the throne of this kingdom; they are the men who, when the English Parliament had trampled on your rights, enabled you to claim those rights, and armed as volunteers to defend their country against foreign enemies and domestic tyrants, and carried you on their back while you preferred your claim of right. Yes; you were carried on the back of an armed people to the sounding of martial music; better harmony than such addresses as these. You were carried on the back of an armed people, and forced, or indeed ravished into the temple of freedom! And now you are to "sell your redeemer, and deliver him up to bondage!" You are now to deprive of their arms those very men at the desire of some of those who would have hanged you for disputing the usurpations of the British Parliament but for those arms — for what cause? They tell you, treason! but I tell them they are not to be credited. Who charge the province of Ulster with treason? Some of those men who called the claim of right in, 1780, treason; some of them who called the meeting at Dungannon, in 1782, treason; some of them who called the best and most constitutional exertions of this country, at the period when she struggled against the commercial restrictions imposed by the Parliamentary power exercised by Great Britain over this country, treason! He had in his possession a paper drawn up by a confidential servant of government at that time, and at this time in confidence, containing thirty or forty articles of high treason, said to have been committed (in the opinion of the framer) by the old volunteers; and, therefore, he did apprehend that now a minister might call constitutional measures, such as the reform of Parliament, treason; and, indeed, if that were treason, he did believe it was a treason of which the north was guilty; but he would add, that he believed every other part of the

kingdom, as well as the north, was guilty of wishing well to that species of treason: and he further acknowledged, that if the reform of Parliament was treason, he must plead guilty to that treason. It was said there were in some parts of the north disaffected societies. Have you enquired how far the misconduct of government might have caused that disaffection? But suppose the fact; does it follow from thence that you should outlaw the whole province? He knew no method so likely to extend those societies, and increase disaffection, as by such an extensive and indiscriminate outlawry. That the discontents and jealousies of the north originally, in his opinion, proceeded from an unconstitutional system of government, and they would be now increased by a conduct that renounced any system of the constitution whatsoever. He believed there was in this country very great dissatisfaction; the measures of government had caused it; the same system of measures would continue to produce it; and every new violence on the part of government would be new discontent on the part of the people; he conceived the present measure to be a step for spreading through the province of Ulster more discontent, more resentment, and more feuds than ever.

He then proceeded to examine the order of His Excellency to General Lake, to seize on the arms of the people of the north of Ireland. Beyond any question whatever, it was in face of law. The lawyers did not attempt to defend its legality. It was not only illegal, but so illegal and so violent that it could not be enforced against the individual without committing an act of felony; or against the province at large, without committing an act of high treason. He apprehended any person who broke into a house and took out arms under this order, was guilty of felony, and that those who advanced with an armed force, breaking into houses generally, and professing that purpose, and taking arms thereout, might perhaps suggest a question, whether they were not guilty of high treason; and the order of the King could not discharge the crime of treason. The exercise of the power of house-breaking and robbery by an armed force generally, perhaps, might be construed, levying war against the King, and come under the act of Edward III.; and it was singular that the ministry, while they attainted the province of Ulster for high treason, appeared to be something little short of being in the act of committing it themselves. He had read of acts of power; he did not forget the reign of Charles, nor that of James II. He remembered to have read the proceedings of the court of High Commission, of

the court of Star Chamber; he recollected to have read of ship-money; of the arrest of the five members of the House of Commons by Charles I.; the dispensing power by James II.; and of the imprisonment of the bishops by the same Prince. But these proceedings, illegal as they undoubtedly were, outrageous as they undoubtedly were, contrary as they undoubtedly were to the fundamental laws of the land, and subversive of those laws, were, when compared to the measure under your consideration — acts of innocence. They set the law at defiance, it is true; they deprived the individual of his property by order of the King, it is true; they deprived the individual of his liberty, it is true; but what is all that to an order of a minister depriving a great province of its arms, and subjecting, on refusal, that province to military execution? I ask you now, will you submit to such an act? Will you sit by with folded arms, and suffer the deputy of an English minister to disarm the Irish? Will you suffer him to enslave your country? Will you suffer him to disgrace her? Will you surrender to him her character, her constitution, her arms, and, in that word, every thing dear to Irishmen? Will the representatives of an Irish people do this? What! without enquiry, in the course of a few hours; without any evidence but the word of a minister, who, in such a case, is no judge; and in this case is a party against the people, who have been insulted by his measures? If this measure be a blow to your liberty, surely it is no less a blow to your security. What will the safety of the individual be when all the people of the north are disarmed, save those who have arms concealed? I say, what will be their situation, if the army shall be removed, and the French land? It is said, when you have disarmed the people of the north, you may withdraw the troops; but I say that after you have disarmed all those of the north who do not hide their arms, you may find those troops still more necessary to defend the partizans of an obnoxious government, and still more obnoxious from this last measure. So far you appear to have resigned the personal safety of the friends of government in the north of Ireland; and, let me here observe, that a man's best security is the love of his fellow-citizens. Nothing in my mind is so silly or hazardous as to discover an extraordinary zeal to trample upon the people, in order to gratify the government; nothing so silly, so unworthy, or so hazardous, as to support the court by insulting the people. So much may be said touching private safety, as affected by this measure; but as to public safety, as to national security,

Father of Mercy! how do you diminish that by this measure? Your army, militia, and yeomanry are sufficient to defend the country against the French, if the people are with you; but are they equal to the two wars, the French war, and the civil war? However brave and gallant these yeoman troops, the latter is not the service they would prefer. Consider again, what is the state of your credit at this time, when you accumulate such difficulties upon yourselves. The message of the former week told us that government had stopped the circulation of money, and the message of this day tells us government has put the north under military execution; in the mean time they have not added to their militia, notwithstanding your vote; nor to their army; nor have they raised the new regiments; nor have they given commissions to raise them. Thus the raising men does not go on; the issue of money does not go on. The government have declared they will persist to proscribe the Catholics, and they now consign the Protestants to military execution; and these are the great measures they are taking against the French. I am astonished the people of England are not alarmed. While you affect to disarm the inhabitants of the north, you are arming their minds against the government; you are arming their minds with a host of resentments, &c. &c. &c. The Irish government cannot recruit for themselves, but they are recruiting for the French; their proclamations are invitations to the French to come; their orders and the execution under those orders, are preparations for a spirit to receive and welcome the French.

If the people of the north, as I hope and make no doubt they will do, remain good and loyal subjects, notwithstanding such a conduct in government, it is because their allegiance is too fixed and noble to be vanquished even by the measures of their ministers. You have read General Hoche's proclamation; I hope he has not read your's. Depend upon it your measures are irreconcileable to the genius of a free people, and are more likely to give spirits to France, than to subdue the spirit of Ireland. Rely on it the north will not be subdued; the people of the north will not be slaves; they may be sufferers for some time, but they will not be slaves; if they are subdued, Ireland is subdued; if liberty is put down there, it is put down here; and therefore their cause is our cause, their disgrace is our disgrace; and an order to disarm them, is an order to handcuff Ireland. When I say this, I do not think you will ultimately succeed in enslaving either Ireland or any part of it; my apprehension is, lest by your measures in general, and this last measure in particular, which I cannot

contemplate without horror, nor read without astonishment, you may fret and irritate to a state of disaffection a people determined to be free, and who will not surrender their freedom either to ministers or to kings. I fear, I say, lest by practices of this sort you may make enemies to royalty, when you only intend to make slaves for ministers; thus when ministers only mean that the people should be deprived of their arms and their liberty, they may deprive the King of the affections of the people, and equally ruin their Sovereign, by their own victories over the laws, as by the victories of the enemy over their arms. Would a ministry, capable of saving this country in the hour of danger, have begun their career by declaring against the Catholics, and have proceeded to an outlawry of the Protestants, through a progress of defeat abroad, and, as far as credit is concerned, insolvency at home? The country, however, may yet be saved. Had the British Parliament interposed in time, it could have prevented the American war; if the Irish Parliament interposes in time, it will prevent the Irish war. If it cannot or will not look to peace with France, it can and ought to look to, and may, if it pleases, command peace with Ireland; it may prevent the sowing those seeds of hostility, the rancour, the disaffection, and the revenge that naturally belong to such measures as these.

Away with the system of coercion; the Jacobinical system. What is the Jacobinical system? It is a contempt for human rights, and a violent encroachment on the laws. What has been our system of coercion, but a violent contempt of the rights and franchises of our fellow-subjects, and a violent outrage on the laws; it has been law-making in the spirit of law-breaking; until now, indeed, our government finds that such an idea of law-making is too slow and limited for their rapid views, and, therefore, they resort to law-breaking in its own true name, without even the affectation of law-making. Believe me, this will not do; neither legal tyranny, nor military execution. Why do you resort to military execution now? Because legal tyranny has failed; because coercion by act of Parliament will not be tolerated by the people of Ireland. You passed a gunpowder bill; what did you get by it? Strength and tranquillity! no; general discontent. That bill was to have quieted every thing; the value of land was to have risen upon it; every man's title was said to have been strengthened by it; that bill, however, failed; and, because it failed, you resorted to a more powerful measure. What was that more powerful measure? Transporting the peasantry

without judge or jury! What did this measure produce? much more discontent. You passed to another measure; an indemnity bill for those who had broken the law to quiet the country. You passed to another measure; an insurrection bill; it deprived the subject in proclaimed districts, of his liberty; but it was to be peace and composure, and liberty was said to be wisely sacrificed for security. What was the consequence of this bill? much more disturbance and discontent; and because this bill had failed, another bill, more powerful, was resorted to — the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. This was the great measure to quiet every thing; accordingly, numbers were arrested; the middling man, who is more one of the people, and, therefore, whose imprisonment was most likely to affect the people, was disposed of in gaols; individuals in vast numbers were arrested. You had not then proceeded to indict provinces; the gaols were filled with every thing said to be dangerous or seditious; now, surely, every thing must be quiet at least; though not free. What is the fact? A message comes from the Lord-lieutenant, stating the whole province to be in a state of rebellion. I do not enquire into the principle of these acts of Parliament, and acts of power; indeed, they are now nearly the same thing. I enquire into their policy; and you must perceive, the stronger you grow in the statute-book, the weaker you grow in the country; the more devoted your majorities, the more averse your people; the more penal laws you obtained, the more disturbance you created; the more liberties you destroyed, the more power you lost; the more you hang, and the more you transport, the more you inflame, disturb, and disaffect; the more you ruin the constitution, the more you undermine the government; and now, having completed your system, which is nothing less than a statute-war, waged against the people, the minister comes to Parliament, and honestly owns, that his system of coercive law will not do; that law in any possible form will not do; and that military execution, in place of law, is now the only thing, on their principles, to secure the peace and the happiness of Ireland.

Remember America — remember America! she complained that she was taxed by the Parliament; the north complain that Ireland is legislated for by the British cabinet. America complained that Boston was persecuted, condemned, and fined, to prompt her to excesses. The north complains that Belfast is persecuted and goaded to work her up and sting her to madness. America complained that the ministry proceeded against her by the irritation of

statute and repeated vollies of intemperate acts, fired like so many hot balls upon the people; she complained particularly of four acts of Parliament; one, shutting up the port of Boston, another altering the chartered constitution of Massachusets bay. You have seen the chartered right of your citizens superseded without even an act. She complained of another, depriving her, in all cases of violence committed by the army on the people, of the benefit of an American jury; and a fourth, establishing a despotic government in Canada to keep in check North America. On each and all of these acts the British Parliament applauded its moderation, and at the close of that fatal code which separated America, the King is made to felicitate himself on the prospect of tranquillity in America, secured by the vigour of his laws and the pacific dispositions of the French. Thus came on of course the American war; a war of arms was the consequence of a war of laws — and separation was the result of both wars — of violent laws and military execution; furious statutes and furious orders. General Gage's proclamation was not wanting, neither was it omitted, to seize on the American arms and ammunition. America complained of the bills above mentioned; the north complains of similar bills; of a gunpowder act, of a convention act, of an insurrection bill, of a suspension of the Habeas Corpus bill, and of acts of violence committed by those employed by government, without any bill or law whatsoever. Are these proceedings and laws more mild or more constitutional with regard to Ireland, than the proceedings committed, or acts passed against America? Or do you imagine they are more agreeable to the people of this country, because imposed, not like the American bills, by a strange Parliament, but by their own Parliament — their native Parliament; who, they think, should, instead of oppressing, defend their fellow-citizens, and those they are supposed to represent, against such or such like acts of power and oppression? To return to America; the enemies of the the stamp act were held out as the enemies of England; the friends of American liberty were represented as the friends of separation; the ministers of England anticipated the separation of America, by presupposing her disaffection, and created the resentment by advancing the punishment. They made penal laws under pretence of prevention; that is, they deprived the people of their liberty, pretending to prevent the commission of any excesses. They abandoned America to councils similar to those to which they have abandoned you; they rebelled against the rights of America and were conquered; and America has left their country a solitary parent in the midst of enemies.

With respect to Ireland, they will avoid the last error; but, to avoid the last error, they must abandon their present system; they have advanced to the brink. I would stop them on the precipice, and appeal to the King, "Sire, time presses; your kingdom of Ireland consists of Protestants and Catholics; your ministers have proscribed the one and outlawed the other; and have brought about this state of things to repel an invasion. Your Majesty should, therefore, interpose for the safety of your crown; you should interpose for the inheritance of your son." I would appeal to the people of England, as they tendered the connection, that they will not forfeit every principle of their own constitution, and every maxim which has characterized them as an honest and free people; those great maxims which their authors have taught, and for which their worthies have bled, and which gave to their country glory and renown, that they will not forfeit those maxims, and hazard their connection with this country, by supporting in violence and outrage a ministry which thus consigns Ireland to military execution. If the court of England are senseless to its danger, I would appeal to the opposition, to Lord Moira, who has a great interest in this country, (Fame he has every where,) to exert his noble efforts, and lend the power of his great name to a cause so interesting to the connection of these kingdoms, and of course to the existence of the empire, and indeed to himself. I appeal to Mr. Fox; he could not preserve *America* to England; he may preserve Ireland; he may preserve her love and affection to the British nation, by opposing gigantic abilities to gigantic despotism, which the ministers of his own country have permitted to establish itself, and to make immense advances in Ireland. Those, indeed, who are authors of our grievances, and the advisers of them, deprecate such interposition; they deprecate any enquiry which may publish their own delinquency; they will state the unconstitutionality of an enquiry by a British Parliament into a conduct which tends to bring the connection into danger, and which derives its principle of motion from the British ministry, as if the connection were not a question of empire, or that a question of empire were not a question for a British Parliament. Let this question be fairly discussed, and the system of coercion and military execution must fall; nothing can save it but a partial insurrection.

If the people of the north suffer themselves to be provoked into violence, they will lose that superiority which law and sufferings give them over their oppressors; their violence is what those oppressors most desire; it would gratify revenge;

it would give colour to persecution. Many of their enemies do not soruple to express a wish for a rebellion in the north: as far as the chief governor or his secretary are concerned, I am far from making such a charge; but certain it is that the friends of military execution in the north of Ireland are afraid of nothing so much as her patience and good order; for patience and good order must prevail. Were the north of Ireland to draw up a statement of her case for the people of Ireland and England, I should hope it would have great effect; for the province of Ulster may depend on it, that the present system of violence and military government cannot last. The only chance of its continuance is the continuance of the present ministry. Their continuance is improbable, and it is impossible that any new ministry would not reverse their plans, and totally and entirely abandon their principles, their maxims, their system of coercion, terror and anarchy; were I to point my recommendation of a legal and peaceful deportment to the people of the north, in the strongest terms, I could frame none stronger than to advise them to avoid the example of violence afforded them by the agents of government. That Ulster would recover her liberty, I wish and believe; and the same Providence that led by the hand through the desert another persecuted tribe, will conduct us through the horrors by which we are surrounded. He then moved the following amendment.

"That we cannot avoid expressing our profound, heartfelt concern, that His Excellency should have been advised to issue an order contrary to the law of the land and the principles of the constitution; which cannot be enforced without violating every thing which is dear to a free people, and without the introduction of military government, and military execution. We do, therefore, most humbly entreat His Excellency to recal the same. We shall, on our parts, enquire into the present state of the country, to enable us to take such measures as her interest may require."

The amendment was opposed by Colonel Blaquiere, Mr. Alexander, Sergeant Stanley, Mr. J. C. Beresford, the Attorney-general (Mr. Wolfe), Mr. Pelham, Mr. Barrington, Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Bagwell and Mr. Egan, who animadverted in strong terms on Mr. Grattan. It was supported by Sir T. Osborne, Mr. Jephson, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Hoare, Mr. George Ponsonby, and Mr Curran. Mr. W. Smith, proposed another amendment, expressing the deep concern of the House at the intelligence communicated to them, stating that they would take the subject into their most serious consideration, requesting the documents that had rendered such a measure adviseable; and in the meantime, suggesting that the military control should be confined to such parts of the province as were in a state of actual disturbance.

Mr. GRATTAN, in reply, observed, that he had expected some detail of the crimes with which the whole north was charged; some facts produced to prove that the disturbances existed so generally as the northern district comprehended in the proclamation. He did expect to hear the gentlemen of the north rise and set forth the state of their counties. He did not expect to find so little information of that sort, or indeed of any sort afforded on the subject. The House seemed to know neither the particular state of the northern counties, nor the extent of the northern district. Instead of knowledge or information, there was a cry, a charge, and a predetermination; much general invective, much indiscriminate accusation; a murder in one county made a reason for outlawing a province; particular crimes made proofs of universal offence, and the argument from the particular to the universal, which would be false in logic, held sound in justice. The legality of the measure had not been defended, and I ask, whether it is not extraordinary that a measure admitted to be illegal, Parliament sitting, should have been adopted and carried into execution, not merely without its advice, but without any communication with Parliament, until a week after General Lake had issued out his order to have the determination of the government carried into execution? The necessity of secrecy might have been a reason why Parliament should not have been consulted before the execution, but could be no reason for delaying the communication till a week after the execution of the measure. The case of Lord George Gordon's mob, as it was termed, did not apply to the present for there was no order to disarm generally; none to disarm the county of Middlesex; none to disarm Surrey. The proceedings in that case applied to a particular act and the place of that act; but the case before you is an order of general disarmament; but why resort to that case to prove the legality of an act which the lawyers of the Crown acknowledge to be illegal?

The arguments on the other side are little more than invectives against constitutional doctrines in general, and against the speeches of those who would defend the liberties of the people; such speeches they had called inflammatory; for instance, we deprecated their system of corruption; we deprecated their system of coercion; and we now deprecate their military execution; we deprecated the suspension of the Habeas Corpus bill; we deprecated a convention bill, and the other acts of power. Among the many, many objections that lay against those acts, we stated *this one* great objection, — that they would inflame the people; that they would render the government odious; that they would render

the law odious. What do the Ministers themselves now say of the effect of those bills? They say that they have so inflamed the people, they can govern no longer according to law, and they must now resort to the bayonet; they tell you, by the message before you, that they have so worked up the people by operation of their laws, as to make them distracted. This is not an assertion of one side or of the other, but a practical acknowledgment of the effects of their system, coming from ministry itself in their message to Parliament; but when gentlemen come to defend this system, they say the dissatisfaction has proceeded from the style of debate; they say that the actual oppression is not understood. Is it the speech or the comment that makes it intolerable to the people? No man would, it seems, know that he was put in prison under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, if some member of Parliament did not tell him so; no man would know that he was sent aboard a tender if he were not to learn that he was there from our speeches! The north, for instance, would not discern a file of men breaking into their houses and taking their arms, but for the intelligence which they receive from the speeches in Dublin! Alas! we know but little of the people, if we talk in this way; such talk is founded in great weakness and great presumption. It supposes that the people neither think nor feel for themselves; it supposes that they entertain that idolatry for Parliament, that if this House were unanimous in their oppression, they would think oppression and military execution mild government; but, in my opinion, the contrary is the fact. I apprehend that if the people perceived this House unanimous or silent upon the subject of their grievances, they would be more discontented and more inflamed; they would conceive that they were wholly abandoned; that there was a combination of the higher order against them without an exception, and therefore when they looked for redress they would look to themselves. It is therefore for the peace of the country, or rather for the restoration of its peace, and for the better securing the connection, that I wish the gentlemen here, in this present moment, would espouse the cause of the people; and that I rejoice some gentlemen in England have brought it forward, and that I wish to direct and interest in that cause the attention of the people of England. In direct opposition to the charge of inflammation, is another charge we have this night encountered, viz. the crime of recommending peace to the people. It has been said that it were better they should proceed to violence; nay, it has been said in so many words, "It were to be wished they did rebel!" Good God! wish they would rebel! Here is the system and the principle of the system; from a system

of corruption to a system of coercion, and so on to military execution, accompanied with a declaration, that it were to be wished the people would go into a rebellion. They tell you they are in a state of rebellion already, in order to justify government to put them under a state of military execution; and they add, no, they are not yet in rebellion; but it is wished they were. For what purpose? to ride over them! We have been censured by a charge of inflaming the people, by those who condemn us also for recommending good order to the people, and express a wish, on their part, at the same time, that the people would rise in rebellion. Thus the system displays itself; to such a pass has it come! The ministry enter into a contest with the people; they did so with the Catholics, and they do so now with the Protestants; their passions become furiously engaged; they proceed from violence to violence, until they precipitate themselves on the last act, which so far transcends all other acts of fury and violence, that they call for a rebellion in order to justify it. Rebellion! and what is to be the consequence? carnage! They are to act upon the people. Surely His Majesty is called upon to interfere to change this system; it is impossible but that every sensible man in England as well as Ireland, except those whose passions are inflamed in the struggle with the people, must see such a thing cannot go on; it is impossible. What! the French threatening to invade you; the Catholics refused their claims, and the Protestants of the north informed, that it is wished they should rise in rebellion, that government *might* act upon them at once! From this, however, the northerns may learn a prudent lesson; they may be aware of the snare that is laid for them; they may see that their good order is their safety, and their insurrection their destruction. I see, therefore, the necessity of their good order in a stronger point of view than I did before, and I see the propriety of repeating the recommendation of it. They are now fully apprized of their danger.

I cannot sit down without adverting to another argument in support of this measure, which comes under the head of folly, more than most of the things I have often heard said and supported; I mean that argument which defends the measure of putting the north under military government, as the most likely means to enable the government to withdraw the troops to oppose the French if they land. Military government will enable you to do it without the army; so it is argued. It is gravely said, when you have put the north under military government, you may withdraw the troops to meet the French in case of an invasion. In the same way the same persons

argued for an insurrection bill; it was to secure tranquillity. They imprisoned the traders of the north to secure tranquillity; and now they put the province under military government, to enable them to withdraw the army. In this kind of way, have they uniformly argued in support of this kind of system; and it is by arguing in this way, and supporting this kind of system, they have brought themselves into their present situation. It is impossible it can last; the thing to be wished is that it may be put an end to with as little disturbance as possible; but to suppose that a system of this sort can go on, or that it is framed for the temper of the people of this country, is frenzy.

A gentleman had spoken as if he himself was not originally, when the Catholics petitioned in 1792, a friend to their entire emancipation, or uniformly a friend to the reform of Parliament; he requested to correct that error, by assuring the House he was then, as now, a friend to the whole and entire emancipation of the Catholics; and was then, as now, and at all times, a friend to parliamentary reform, and had voted for it in every shape in which it had appeared in Parliament. The gentleman seems to think that on these subjects we cannot, on the supposition of coming into power, if that were likely perform our engagement. I thank him for an observation, which gives me an opportunity of declaring, that I can never agree to have any connection with a ministry that shall not in the most full and ample manner concede to the people of Ireland these two great objects.

Another honourable member (Mr. Egan) was pleased to say much to the prejudice of my Lord Fitzwilliam's administration; to that I have only to answer, it was a little unfortunate for the honourable gentleman's political consistency, that he did not much sooner discover the errors of that adminstration, which, while in power, was the object of his strenuous support, and the subject of his warm panegyric. At the same time that I am to thank that honourable gentleman for the support, I would say, the *unsolicited* support which he gave to that administration, no doubt, with the purest intentions, and without any view to patronage; for the honourable member is his own patron; I own I am not much surprised at his language. A minister in the zenith of power seldom wants the support of very warm friends, though, when he is out of that power, he must endeavour to console himself for their desertion. The honourable member has said a good deal of the bad intentions by which, he thinks proper to alledge, I and my friends are actuated; and this in a style of *moderation* peculiar to himself. The honourable member, to be sure, has

odd methods of making the House laugh. He has talked much of French principles and of insurrection; and, I believe, amongst other things, said something of cutting off *my* head! and this in a manner so peculiarly his own, in the fury and whirlwind of his passion, that though I did not actually behold the *guillotine*, of which he spoke, I thought I saw the *executioner*. However, as to the kind of imputation thrown out against me in this kind of way, I regard them with utter contempt. The honourable member has said, that I and my friends are mortgaged to the country for certain measures which we have always professed — we are so; and I thank the honourable member for the opportunity he has given me, on this occasion, of declaring, once for all, my firm resolution, that the total emancipation of the Catholic, and a reform of the representation of the people, which he may have a good cause for opposing, but which I have a much better cause for supporting, are the indispensable conditions upon which I can ever be connected with any authority in the government of this country.

Mr. Egan rose, and with considerable warmth replied to Mr. Grattan; but as his remarks proceeded to much personality, it is not necessary that they should here be repeated. Mr. Grattan was then induced to rise a second time; and, after another reply, concluded by the following quotation:

> "There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats;
> For I am armed so strong in honesty,
> That they pass by me as the idle wind
> Which I respect not." *

The House then divided on Mr. Grattan's amendment; — Ayes 16, Noes 127; Majority 111.

Mr. Smith's amendment was then put, and the numbers were, — Ayes, 12, Noes 116; Majority 104.

* To prevent any unpleasant consequences, the Speaker sent for Mr. Grattan and Mr. Egan, who had both left the House, and a mutual reconciliation was effected.

MOTION FOR THE REPEAL OF THE INSURRECTION ACT.

MR. PONSONBY MOVES THE REPEAL OF THE INSURRECTION ACT.

March 24. 1797.

MR. GEORGE PONSONBY rose in pursuance of notice, and entered into an examination of that system by which Ireland had been governed of late years. He took a review of our contest with France, and regretted the disasters that had befallen Great Britain; they could only be repaired by the union of all parties at home; but, instead of such a system, the people of Ireland were debarred from these common rights and privileges, which were allowed to the people of Great Britain. Government had, for four years past, gone on, backing penal law by penal law, every subsequent law more severe than the preceding, and the consequence has been more discord and more weakness. Coercion, he said, will never do; the enemy will take advantage of our discontents, to make Ireland a party against Great Britain. He said, he imputed no bad motives to the authors of these strong measures, but that the system they adopted was mischievous, and, if persevered in, must prove fatal to the peace, as it has to the liberties of the country. He then moved:

"That leave be given to bring in a bill, to repeal an act passed in the 36th year of His present Majesty, entitled an act for preventing and suppressing insurrections, and disturbances of the public peace."

The motion was opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell), Sir Henry Cavendish, Mr. Coote, Lord C. Fitzgerald, Colonel Blaquiere, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Sir Edward Newenham, Sir Frederick Flood, Mr. Osborne, Sir Laurence Parsons, Mr. S. Moore, Mr. Ogle, Mr. Ormsby, Mr. Bushe, Mr. Knox, Mr. Marcus Beresford, and Mr. Alexander. They grounded their objection to the motion, on the disturbed state of the country, which required a strong government. That the convention bill, and the present bill, were absolutely necessary to repress the seditious spirit that was afloat; and if the motion was acceded to, it would look like concession to men arming and arraying themselves against the state, and would only serve to encourage and assist them, instead of detaching them from their pursuits and reconciling them to the laws, and to the government of the country.

The motion was supported by Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Tighe, and Mr. Grattan. They contended that the violent measures resorted to by the administration would produce effects the very reverse of what was expected; they would increase discontent and sedition. They had been tried of late and had failed. The sys-

tem of coercion must be changed. Government had not only withheld what the people asked, but had passed the severest laws against them; they had superseded the constitution. The origin of the evil was the convention act, and that having passed, stronger measures became necessary to support it; nothing could be so severe as the conduct of government; they had passed penal law after penal law, and nothing is now left but the infliction of military execution. They proscribed the people by provinces; they placed the north under martial law; and God knows how it will terminate; it cannot be peace.

Mr. GRATTAN rose, merely to declare his conviction, that the repeal of this law was a measure necessary for the peace of the country. The honourable gentleman who spoke last, said he had given a melancholy assent to these bills last year; his assent was *melancholy* only, because he knew they were inconsistent with the constitutional liberty of the subject, and could be justified only by the necessity of the times. Experience had now shown, that they had not answered the end for which they were designed, and therefore, as they were both inefficient and unconstitutional, the repeal of them appeared to be a necessary and just measure.

Mr. Ponsonby replied, and the question was then put upon his motion, when the House divided, for the motion;— Ayes 14, Noes 127; Majority against the repeal of the insurrection act 113. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. William Tighe. Noes, Mr. C. Bushe and Mr. Osborne.

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY.

TREASONABLE PAPERS ARE LAID BEFORE THE HOUSE BY ORDER OF THE LORD-LIEUTENANT.

April 29. 1797.

ON this day, Mr Pelham presented to the House the following message from His Excellency.

"CAMDEN,

"Upon information of the meetings of certain persons, styling themselves United Irishmen, for the purpose of concerting plans for the subversion of the constitution, and of the established government of this kingdom, two committees in the town of Belfast have been arrested, and their papers seized. They contain matter of so much importance to the public welfare, that I have directed

them to be laid before the House of Commons, and I recommend it to them to take the same into their serious consideration. I shall, in the mean time, pursue those measures which have received your sanction and approbation with unremitting vigour, and employ the force entrusted to me in the most efficient manner for the protection of His Majesty's faithful subjects, against all treasonable designs, and for bringing to condign punishment those who are endeavouring to overturn the constitution, and betray this country into the hands of her enemies."

Mr. Pelham proposed to refer the papers to a committee of secrecy; the papers were of such a nature, that it was probable they might be hereafter brought forward in a court of justice, for the conviction of the persons in whose custody they had been found. Their public disclosure at present, would, therefore, impede the ends of justice; much of the evidence must necessarily be oral, which it would not be proper to lay before the public. The papers, ought, therefore, to be submitted to a secret committee. He accordingly moved, "That the message be taken into consideration, and then that the papers be referred to a secret committee to report to the House thereon."

Mr. GRATTAN was against a secret committee. It was reasonable to suppose, from the nature of this communication from His Excellency, that the lives and properties of the subject were to be subjected to new measures of coercion; it was, therefore, highly unjust, that the committee who were to suggest those measures should be secret; for himself, he would never agree to commit the people of Ireland to the mercy of a secret committee. In the formation of these secret committees in England, the minister was believed to have considerable influence: no man could think that the influence of the minister in this country would be less strong, or less industriously exerted. To commit the lives and properties of the people of Ireland, therefore, to a secret committee, was, in effect, to put their lives and fortunes into the hand of the minister, and this too at a time when the misconduct of the minister in both countries was the subject of very general complaint, and when both countries, almost unanimously, demanded their dismissal. He was the more inclined to resist this application of ministers for a secret committee, of which their malignity against the people might make a convenient instrument, because he entirely disapproved of their past conduct, and detested that system by which they had misgoverned the country; because he saw that all their measures, whether parliamentary or military, tended equally to increase the calamities of the people; and because he saw that each successive measure they had tried, was more unjust and unconstitutional than the former.

He opposed this measure for another reason, though certainly less strong than the former, because, like their other measures, it would weaken the government instead of increasing its strength, and would aggravate the mischiefs of that system by which they had already brought the monarchy into disrepute, and loosened the connection of the two countries. Much he knew would be said about political expedience, and the necessity of the times. Speculation might devise innumerable reasons for this or any measure, but no honest man would give up the lives and property of the people on an argument of speculation. Administration had been sufficiently indulged in speculations of this kind; and the result was, that every constitutional right of the people had been grossly violated, and the discontents of the country aggravated to an alarming degree. On the whole, disapproving as he did of the system which had been pursued by administration in this country for some years back, and believing that it would be both unjust in itself and likely to be most dangerous in its consequences, to entrust a secret committee with such powers as it was now sought to give it, he would oppose the motion.

Mr. Egan and the Attorney-general supported the motion; and the question being put, it was carried without a division.

MR. FOX'S SPEECH.

May 3. 1797.

MR. FOX had, on the 23d of March, made a motion in the British House of Commons, on the state of Ireland, and had proposed, — "That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, to entreat His Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to take into his royal consideration the disturbed state of his kingdom of Ireland, and to adopt such healing and lenient measures as may appear to His Majesty's wisdom best calculated to restore tranquillity, and to conciliate the affections of all descriptions of His Majesty's subjects in that kingdom, to His Majesty's person and government." He entered at large into the state of Ireland; he observed, that it must appear to many very extraordinary, that, since the recognition of Irish independence in 1782, the discontents of that country should have gone on increasing, until they had arrived at the present alarming state. It was clear, that, although Ireland recovered her independent legislature, yet the people had not that influence in the House of Commons, which should exist in a free constitution; the defect arose from the vicious state of the representation. In addition to this defect, it hap-

pened that five-sixths of the inhabitants were Roman Catholics, who were, in a great degree, excluded from the privileges of the constitution; and an opinion prevailed, that the influence of the executive, counteracted the benefits which the legislative branch of the constitution had obtained in 1782. At the period of His Majesty's illness, in 1789, the Lord-lieutenant and the two Houses of Irish Parliament had differed in opinion; the Lord-lieutenant was censured by the Parliament; upon which the influence of the executive power was in a most unconstitutional manner put into operation; it was openly and corruptly exerted, and the Parliament was thereby prevailed on to unsay all that it had said before. It was matter of notoriety, that a regular plan was then devised to destroy the independence of the country; it was matter of notoriety, that a person in high station (Lord Chancellor Clare), had, at that period, declared, that half a million had formerly been expended in quelling an opposition, and that half a million more should be expended in that way again. Government had been charged with selling peerages, and charged not lightly, but by men of high public character and private virtues, of great abilities, and unimpeached honour; proof of the fact was offered, but Parliament refused to listen to the complaint. On the subject of the Roman Catholics, Parliament had, in one session, indignantly and insultingly rejected their petition, which prayed only for a moderate relaxation of the oppressive measures, under which they laboured. But in the next session, when a recommendation came from the throne, on that subject, the same minister and the same House, who had before rejected this clause, now yielded much more important ones. Hence it appeared, that the independence of the Irish Parliament was but a name; the executive power was every thing, and the people nothing. What afterwards happened? In 1795, an honourable friend of mine, was sent over to Ireland; he was the most popular Lord-lieutenant ever sent there *; yet after the known preparations to vote the complete emancipation of the Catholics, he is of a sudden dismissed, and the entire system changed. Then commenced a course of violent measures against the people, and inordinate powers; from one act of rigour to another; remedies that only strengthened the disease and increased the evil, until every principle of law and constitution was effaced, and military force became the desperate application. The people of the south of Ireland had been complimented for their loyalty on the late attempt at invasion; that was but empty praise. The situation of the Catholics is *laudatur et alget*—mild measures should now be resorted to; arms should be the last resource, and the words that Mr. Burke applied to America, may justly be applied to Ireland, "*you must concede and conciliate.*" Sir Francis Burdett seconded the motion. It was supported by Mr. William Smith, Lord Wycombe, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Curwen, and Mr Hobhouse. It was opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Pitt), Lord Hawksbury, Colonel Fullarton, Lord Frederick Campbell, and General Egerton. Mr. Pitt said, that the motion

* The Earl Fitzwilliam.

went to affect the independence of the Irish Parliament; this independence had been recognized in 1782, and the interference of the British parliament would not now be admitted. The address specified nothing; it conveyed a general sort of advice to His Majesty, which, for any effectual purpose, was quite nugatory; the question regarding the Catholics had been unfairly introduced, and had nothing to do with the business. On a division, the numbers were, for Mr. Fox's motion 84, against it 220. In consequence of these proceedings, Dr. Duigenan gave notice, that he would bring on a motion relating to Mr. Fox's conduct, and on the 11th April,

Mr. GRATTAN said: he hoped that the learned doctor, who who had given notice of his intention to make a motion, relative to the propositions in the English Parliament, submitted by Lord Moira and Mr. Fox, would mention, in due time, the day on which he meant to prefer his charge. He took that opportunity of stating, that the measures suggested by those two distinguished characters, were strictly constitutional, in every point of view just and reasonable, and, in his opinion, necessary for the safety of the empire.

Dr. Duigenan said, he would bring forward the motion as soon as it was likely that there would be a full attendance of members. Accordingly, on this day (the 3d), he made his promised motion. He considered the speech of Mr. Fox, as given in the Morning Chronicle newspaper, of the 24th of March last, in three points of view, "1st, As a false, scandalous, and malicious libel upon the Irish Parliament: 2dly, As a violent invasion of the independence of the House of Commons; and, 3dly, As a *flagitious attempt to excite treason and rebellion in the country;*" it assumed that England could legislate for Ireland in all matters, whether of external or internal regulation. Mr. Fox had gone so far as to dictate the two specific measures, reform and emancipation. His assertions regarding the Catholics were unfounded, for they were entitled to all the advantages which the Protestants enjoy, except a few offices. The learned doctor next attacked the administration of Lord Fitzwilliam; accused him of being friendly to the Catholics in exclusion of the Protestants. He commended the insurrection act and General Lake's proclamation; and, after *charging the publication with falsehood, calumny, and treason, concluded by* moving that the libel be read at the bar.

The Attorney-general opposed the motion, and entreated the learned doctor to withdraw it. He thought the House should do nothing in the affair, as no steps had been taken by the British Parliament, in consequence of the speech; he accordingly moved the order of the day.

Mr. Pelham was against the original motion, but he *condemned* the speech of Mr. Fox, which went to take up the cause of the people of Ireland against their Parliament, and make ministers answerable for the acts of the legislature. The motion of Dr. Duigenan was supported by Mr. Ogle and Mr. Maxwell, and op-

posed by Mr. W. Smith, Dr. Browne, Mr. Ponsonby, and Mr. Grattan. They argued that although there existed two distinct and independent legislatures, they formed part of the same empire, and were under the dominion of one King, and it was the duty of each to preserve the integrity of the empire, and to resist measures that tended to its dismemberment. It was absurd to say, this was an attack on Irish independence; the object of Mr. Fox's motion was to assert the independence of the Irish Parliament, and he accordingly complains that this independence had been attacked by the minister. It was singular and rather whimsical to behold these new converts, men who professed to be so jealous of Irish independence, and such supporters of the constitution. Men, who claimed to excel the patriots of 1782; it so happened that they were the very men who now uniformly opposed every popular and every constitutional measure, and have defended the strongest and most penal acts of the government.

Mr. GRATTAN observed: that a few minutes were sufficient to reply to a speech of many hours; the learned gentleman's discourse was a strain of invective, the most unqualified in its extent, and the most peculiar in its nature. He has collected his parts of speech from the tenor of indictments, and the phraseology of the old controversialists. He scorned any thing which was classical, moderate, or refined; and preferred as more effectual, the foul, the gross, and the scandalous; with all the garbage his imagination could collect; with whatever flowers the fish-market could furnish; every thing which the streets could administer to the learned doctor's taste and refinement. He assailed all men, and all bodies of men, overlaid them with such a heap of profuse dirt and kennel, as to amaze all who were not acquainted with the ways and customs of the learned doctor. As to myself, I know the gentleman too well to be surprised or affected at any of his attacks; but I request the learned doctor in future, to confine the application of the foul materials he deals in, to gentlemen in the House, and to spare his country. I request he will not hereafter make the fair fame of honest, useful, and respectable citizens not present to defend themselves, the subject of his most extraordinary and offensive orations. This is the worst species of tyranny, a tyranny over character. He has traduced the body of the Catholics as the beggary of Ireland, the individuals he has described as the rebels of Ireland, the Presbyterians he has called the democrats; now the Catholics and Presbyterians are nearly the whole people, and thus in one night does he dispose of them all. This is his way of reconciling the Irish; his short method of comprehending all his countrymen in one monstrous, villanous and ridiculous description. I request to submit to the judgment of the

learned doctor, whether it becomes a senator to bring into debate in which they were not a party, innocent, respectable, and useful citizens, and to name them merely for the purpose of taking away their character. I beg to suggest to the learned gentleman, how hateful and abominable the members of Parliament will be to the people, if, instead of representing their wishes, they assemble only to take away their reputation. What a horrid midnight business our debates must be, if gentlemen indulge themselves in this privileged calumny, in this licensed abuse, in this inanity of scurrility, weak, clamorous, fatiguing, and disgusting; and, therefore, if the learned doctor cannot change his manners, how much it were to be wished that he should change the objects of them! Let him have mercy on his country, and confine his genius of abuse to members of this House. The learned doctor divided his oration into three heads; the first to prove the speech in question false; the second to prove it unconstitutional; the third to prove it treasonable. The last head is too laughable to be adverted to; on the two first, I beg to say a little. The learned gentleman, as the first instance of falsehood, says, the speech assumes to Mr. Fox the merit of moving the recognition of Irish independency; whereas, says he, the repeal of the 6th of George I. did nothing. We will not take the learned doctor's word for that, though he is a lawyer; better lawyers said the contrary; the present Chief-Baron, among others, said so; other inferior but considerable law authorities, even the enemy of the Whig-party, declared that the distinction between repeal and renunciation was a quibble. The late Mr. Flood certainly maintained the contrary, a very able man; his opinion was a very able opinion, and a man of such ability and such impression, that even in error he was great and powerful. If there was a fault in that business, which I do not allow, most assuredly that fault did not attach to Mr. Fox; the fault was with us. Mr. Fox did what we asked; if we did not ask what was sufficient, which I deny, Mr. Fox was not to blame. However, the learned doctor speaks of transactions of which he knows nothing. In the same strain of ignorance does the doctor say, that Mr. Fox opposed the act of renunciation; he had not opposed it, he said he would not oppose it, but he thought it unnecessary. When the minister accuses the speech of Mr. Fox of departing from fact, he should not himself have departed from fact in almost every particular. With the same contempt of fact does the learned doctor say, we patronized a pamphlet written for reform and Catholic emancipation in Lord Fitzwilliam's

ministry. The fact is not so; the pamphlet alluded to, a very ingenious pamphlet, was unknown to us until published.

The learned doctor has called the administration of Lord Fitzwilliam, the patrons of democracy and popery; if to be a friend to the Catholics of Ireland, and to be zealously attached to a full, fair, and unequivocal reform in the representation of the people, be, to patronize popery and democracy, I glory in the charge; no change, no circumstances shall ever make me conceal that sentiment, or abate the warmth of my present pursuit, (the emancipation of the Catholic, and the reform of the representation,) for I think these measures are essential to the liberty, and the independence of the Parliament.

In the same strain of contempt for fact, the learned doctor says, that Lord Fitzwilliam excluded the Catholic nobility, and admitted the citizens. The fact is not so; he admitted both the heads of the Catholics and the citizens; he embraced the nobility; he cherished the body; and by thus doing he would have been enabled to tranquillize and unite the the country.

I might follow the learned doctor through the greater part of his speech if the House would listen to me, and show a multitude of instances in which the doctor is totally unfounded in fact; instances, to show with what carelessness he makes a charge, and takes his chance for the truth of it.

The learned gentleman has told you that in the county of Down there is no linen manufacture; Sir, the county abounds with it. He has told you the north is not affected by the war; the north has lost its trade by the war; the kingdom has lost its trade by the war; no money can be got on private security, nor on public security, without an interest amounting to usury.

The learned gentleman has told you that in Lord Fitzwilliam's time the Catholic bill would have been lost; the contrary is notorious. He has told you that Lord Fitzwilliam knew he would lose it, but thought to succeed by repeated applications; not a syllable of this is the case. I do not say the learned gentleman means to say any thing which is untrue; but that where his prejudice interferes, his narrative should go for nothing. But I should tire you by dwelling longer on the first head; I come to the second. He says the speech is unconstitutional, most unconstitutional and libellous. How libellous? Because it charges the Irish Parliament with the crime of being governed by the British minister. If, then, the charge of such a crime be an atrocious offence what must be the crime itself? Now, who is the judge of the fact?

The people who elect you. If, then, the people think, that the Irish Parliament is the instrument of the British minister, they have the doctor's authority to say, that the minister here and there, that the majority, that the learned doctor himself, are guilty of high and atrocious offences; he has pronounced a sentence against them, against himself, against his party, and his majority, provided the fact of that corrupt influence be admitted. He himself has estimated the atrocity of the offence. In his invective against the charge, he has involved himself in a much stronger invective against the offence. The learned gentleman will not be allowed the benefit of these two contradictory propositions, — that it is a mighty offence to charge a majority of Parliament with corruption, but no crime in that majority to be corrupt; no crime in the minister who introduces that corruption. He is, therefore, by his own authority, convicted, unless it happens, that the British minister has *not* an ascendant influence here; on the truth of that proposition depends whatever credit the gentleman must look to, for sincerity in the principle on which he professes to make his motion, and upon that he must rest for whatever chance he has to be rescued from his own condemnation, and from that crime which, he says, is so atrocious, that even the charge is an atrocity. It would seem that it was not the encroachment, but the picture that offended; the picture of the Irish Parliament, given in another country. This seems to be the sting. The law of shame has more effect than the law of virtue.

Little is necessary to refute the charge against the motions made in the British Parliament, unless it be to state what those motions were: They purported to counsel His Majesty to reconcile the Irish to Great Britain; they were founded on federative, not legislative principles; on the ground of national amity, not internal regulation; they had in view the concord of the connection; they were directed to the King, because he is the medium of communication between Great Britain and other nations, whether connected, as Ireland, or distinct, as the continent. Such a motion would be perfectly regular, if Holland, if Spain, if any other nation had been the object of it. Suppose an address from the Parliament of England to His Majesty to pursue such measures as should reconcile the court of Florence; it was in the course of the war much offended with Great Britain: suppose a motion to the King to pursue such measures as should reconcile *the* Dutch; they certainly were extremely jealous of the *intrigues* of Great Britain in the affairs of Holland: suppose a motion

to the King to take such measures as would reconcile the French; they certainly have been much irritated by the conduct and language of the British court, as much, or much more, perhaps, than by its arms. Such an interference might well take place between two separate countries, (still more between two sister countries), through the constitutional and the only means of communication; the King, at the advice of his constitutional council, the two Houses of Parliament, wishing to reconcile to Great Britain the affection of nations rendered hostile or doubtful, insulted and disgusted by the British minister. But with respect to Ireland, the reasons for the interposition are not only sound, but they are irresistible; and such are the reasons given in the speeches by which these motions were introduced. What is the case? The connection is shaken by the crimes of the British ministers. What are their crimes? The speech states them. Mr. Fox mentions the great, the productive, and the fatal transgression; such a transgression as will shake the connection, and does shake it to its base; such a transgression as is not less notorious than heinous and destructive; such a one as the great body of the people of Ireland cry out against, as far as they have a tongue left to deliver the wringings of their heart. What is that transgression? it is nothing more nor less than a system established by the minister of England, for restoring to Great Britain the power of acting as the legislature of Ireland; and if any thing can make such an attempt still more horrid and detestable, it is, that the power so restored is to be exercised, not by the Parliament of Great Britain, but her cabinet, and degradation itself is still further degraded. Will any man deny the fact? Will any man justify the fact? The Parliament of England, and especially that member who moved, that the British Parliament should surrender her legislative dominion over Ireland, were bound in honour, in sense, and in justice, to provide that it should not be intercepted by their own minister; that the power which they relinquished to Ireland should not be stolen by that minister, and put in his pocket. They were to be the guarantees of their own honours, and the faithful depositor of their own concession; they were not to sully their name by the vile artifice of secretly but substantially transferring to a cabinet, as a cheat, a power which they affected to surrender as a nation. But we will speak, not of the infamy of such a practice; look to the folly of it; the British Parliament surrendered its legislative power; I call it power, as distinct from right, in order to reconcile the Irish. Your affection was the

compensation and the price of that surrender. Suffer the British minister to take that power, and the British Parliament loses at once the power and the affection; that Parliament, and that member of that Parliament, are therefore called upon to ask how it has happened, that Britain has not secured that affection; that the people of Ireland are as discontented with England as ever? It is their and his duty to enquire, whether the British minister has not, by sinister means, destroyed that independent legislative power which they intended to restore to Ireland, and thereby, that love and affection which they meant to secure to Great Britain? It is their duty to enquire, whether he has not stolen, purloined, and run away with the concession they meant for Ireland, and destroyed by that theft, plunder, and sacrilege, the quiet, the security, and the concord which they intended for themselves and the empire? He who was the mover in this case, grounds his apprehensions on certain facts; the sale of the peerage. Is it denied? and with a view to establish seats in the Commons for the minister's representatives.

He states the sudden creation of a vast number of parliamentary provisions for the same purpose. Is that denied? Look at your establishment; look at your majority. He states a public declaration of the purpose for which half-a-million was disposed of; a declaration of a favoured minion of government, betraying and defending the practices of the Crown. We cannot say, consistently with order, with what effect the British minister, through the medium of the Irish minister, interposed in this signal way for the purpose of transferring to himself the power of the Irish Parliament; but that he has that purpose, that he has made that effort, that he felt that pruriency, that he avowed that passion to consummate with the Irish Parliament, in rank and adulterous embraces; that he has made the proposal to you to betray your honourable and plighted marriage vow with the people, and to engender in a monstrous knot, and unnatural stricture with him, is a shame too notorious to be questioned. As symptoms of the success of those proposals, the mover adduced several sudden and unaccountable changes; for instance, on the Catholic question in 1792 and 1793, and on the same question in 1795, at the anxious moment of His Majesty's indisposition and recovery, and also at the departure of Lord Fitzwilliam. Without enquiring into the motives of those changes, I ask, can any man deny the facts? And if any English member of Parliament, that member particularly who moved for the surrender of English interference in Irish legislation, thought

that they did proceed from a resumption of that interference by persons in whom it would be spurned at by the people with most indignation, (the members of the cabinet of England,) is not he called upon to re-assert English honour against English ministers, and to substantiate the good faith of English dealing against the bad faith of ministerial dealing, against their foul and desperate practices to enslave one country, to dishonour another, and to involve both, having involved already a great portion of one country with her own administration, and eventually with England? Is he, I say, not called upon by the principle of justice and by the principle of safety? Is he not called on to prevent his own minister from enslaving one country, and involving both, and disgracing the British name in every quarter of the globe, at home and abroad? But the case is stronger if we consider in what manner the particular measures he alludes to have been opposed in Ireland; the Catholic bill, for instance, he notices justly and necessarily, why? Because Catholic incapacity has been made an imperial act; because that Catholic bill has been resisted by the government in the name of England; the odium of that resistance has been by their own government thrown on the people of England; the incapacitation of the Catholic from the state and the Parliament, has been relied on by government as a necessary sacrifice to British connection and the British crown. The Catholic incapacitation has been made by government an imperial, not a municipal question; it has been made the crime of England; it is the crime of the British government. The removal of the Lord-lieutenant, who proposed it, was made the cause of England. He is removed for the preservation of the empire. Who said so? The English cabinet. Why did they say so? Because he supported the emancipation of the Catholics. The reform of Parliament in the same manner; that question the honourable gentleman alluded to, particularised. How has the reform bill been talked of? A separation; a republic; an attack on the connection; an attack on the Crown. Why has the reform bill been resisted by the British minister? Because it would destroy his legislative authority in Ireland.—*a country where it is treason for him to have any!* Because it is his question, that is an English question, the question of an English minister, endeavouring to exercise over Ireland legislative power; and, on the other side, of the people of Ireland, who before desired that the Parliament of England should not exercise such a power, and who now desire, desire, do I say? demand, that the minister of England should not exercise

such a power. Has any man read our debates? Has any man read the speeches of ministers? Did any man read the speech of one of them in 1793? Is not the question of Catholic suffrage and parliamentary reform argued there as questions that related to England? Are they not resisted on account of England? and are not both sacrificed in a strain of the vilest and falsest calumny against Ireland; and in as vile and polluted sycophantism offered at the shrine of the British court and nation?

I might further observe, that most of the constitutional questions that have been proposed in Ireland have been resisted in the name of England. What was the case of the responsibility bill? Ruinous they said to the English government. What has been the defence of the clerk government in Ireland? Whence the clerk government? Whence but the unconstitutional power of British government encroaching on this kingdom, and taking by theft what it restored by compact? What has been the argument for the extinction of an Irish cabinet and an Irish executive? What has been the language when we complained of irresponsible and fugacious power; when we proposed a Catholic emancipation proposition; when we supported a reform proposition, resisting corruption, contending for liberty; what has been the charge? You wish to separate; that is, the unconstitutional and abominable interference of the British minister in every department of our constitution, to the ruin of its independency and to the destruction of morals, has been made by the servants of government the test of connection, and the constitution itself has been made the test of separation. They have made use not only of the name but of the terror of England — a people not easily raised nor easily put down. They have done more; they have answered petitions by English troops; Irish prayers by English arms!

On what grounds did gentlemen oppose the Catholic bill and the reform? Because it was said they affected the interests of England. It was pretended that they were English questions as well as questions of internal regulation. What then should prevent an honest English senator from disclaiming this flimsy pretext for refusing the wishes of the people, and saying to the Crown, let the Irish legislature govern itself as it shall think fit? Great Britain will not be injured by the Irish Catholic being made free; nor will the connection be weakened by the Irish representation being reformed. Had the Parliament of England spoken thus in the language of Mr. Fox, we should not in this country continue long to have a government of clerks. There would be an end to the traffic

of Parliament and to the trade of blood. Ireland would now have a free government; not that government which the learned doctor wishes to see prevail in Ireland — the government of a garrison in an enemy's country; that garrison the Protestant, and that enemy the people. The Parliament of Ireland would be independent instead of enjoying the independence which the learned doctor contends for — the privilege to destroy independence; the liberty to transport without judge or jury; an independence to sell peerages and purchase boroughs; to use the name of liberty against the freedom of the people, and to submit with fawning servility to the irresponsibility of the British minister.

Therefore it is I admire that great and illustrious Englishman, who disavows all these practices, and who rescues, or would rescue his country from the dishonour of the measures which have been inflicted in her name and under pretence of her interest. I remember it was said by ministers at the time of the American war, let the Parliament give up the power of making law for America, and the minister will get it by bribery. I admire, I say, that illustrious Englishman who scorns to connive at such bribery; and who, when once he decides to relinquish a tyrannical power will not suffer his country, in a more tyrannical and more degrading shape to resume it. He will not suffer evasion where he meant surrender, nor a fraud where he meant justice, nor a heartscald where he meant a peace-offering; but, on the contrary, interferes not, as has been stated, with Irish legislation, but with the interference of his own minister with Irish legislation; with the frauds of his minister committed against Ireland; and arrests an Irish tyrant in the person of a British minister. This is still stronger when your consider how involved the safety of England is in the consequence of that minister's interference. Is England wholly unconcerned in the connection? Is England unconcerned in the northern war and its consequences? Was she unconcerned in the American war? If an English minister pursues a system which creates what he calls an insurrection; if he goes on and changes the nature of the Irish government; if he force, drive, precipitate on the eve of a civil war; if he precipitates England on the eve of that civil war, is she unconcerned? Is the member of the British Parliament obtrusive who deprecates that war? Is Lord Moira connected in both countries, distinguished in both, looked up to by both, to take no part for either, and leave them to ministers to set them adrift from one another? Is Mr. Fox, in the other House, is he to leave the empire and the connection, to the British cabinet and dragoons — the

only connection now which remains to England? Is he to leave Ireland to follow the fate of America? Has the Parliament of England no right to interfere with the minister of England, involving these countries and the connection in a civil war, proceeding originally from his own endeavour to uphold in Ireland his own unconstitutional power? Should not we have said to Mr. Fox, what! did you warn your country against an American war, and would you have saved her empire? Did you admonish her on the subject of the French war, and will you not prevent an Irish war? Or has the prophet's fire spent itself, that foretold so much? No! he chose a subject that called on his exertion; and how did he treat it? Gentlemen talk of an attack on the independency of the Irish Parliament by the minister; admitted, but not by him. What idea has he disclosed as just and applicable to Ireland; an Irish legislature and an Irish government, a genuine executive and a genuine Parliament. *Major rerum nascitur ordo*; no clerk government, no trade of boroughs, no trade of Parliament, no trade of blood, no half million, no sale of peerages, no insurrection bill, no military execution, no civil wars. Why an Irish government and an Irish Parliament? For every reason. As an Englishman he states one to strengthen the connection. How strengthen the connection? By removing the motives of separation. This is an idea worthy of a comprehensive statesman. He applies to great passions and great principles, for the government of a great country. He rejects every thing which is founded in persecution for the purpose of religion, and in corruption for the purpose of government, and rests the connection on solid interest, solid pride, and those permanent and productive principles, which each country may avow; which will not make either country ashamed of being connected with the other. The learned doctor inveighs against such a character. Should you wish to measure the abilities of such a statesman? Measure them by the gigantic proportions of the calamities he would have prevented, by the American empire, which his advice would have preserved; by the 250,000,000*l.* of debt, the consequence of two wars, which his advice would have saved. He stood against the current of the court; he stood against the tide of the people; he stood against both united; he was the isthmus lashed by the waves of democracy, and by the torrent of despotism, unaffected by either, and superior to both; (the Marpesian rock that struck its base to the centre, and raised its forehead to the skies). He has, however, been replied upon: it was said his motion was general; that is, his motion was not a

legislative interference; so that his motion was perfectly constitutional, and the objection perfectly false; a motion founded on the federal principle of concord, not the intrusive principle of legislation. But the speech was attacked. It was added, in the doctor's strain, that the interference was an attack on the independency of the Irish Parliament. What! the ministry that sold the Irish peerage, to buy the Irish Commons! the ministry that laid out half a million to procure a majority in the Irish Commons! that ministry that generated a growth of fifteen new parliamentary provisions to obtain that majority! that ministry whose agent here avowed the practice! Does the daily advocate of that ministry now set up; does the learned gentleman set up the independency of the Irish Parliament? I say, does the learned advocate for the ministry plead the independency of the Irish Parliament? That ministry, whose wish, whose unblushing venality, whose violent, lawless, and furious systems have been employed to bring back to England the power of dominating in Ireland, every where, in the cabinet, in the Commons, in the corporation! does that ministry dare to advance the independency of the Irish Parliament against a proceeding, to thwart their practices to subvert that independency? Oh! I suppose their plea is, that they have bought Ireland; it is now their property. What is the independency they talk of? he talks of? Their independent and uncontrolled right to purchase that Parliament; their independent right of selling the peerage; their independent right of procuring the Commons! When a tyrant, when the advocate of a tyrant sets up the independency of a Parliament that he has endeavoured to buy, and of a people whom he has enslaved, I am astonished at the unblushing effrontery of that tyrant, and the advocate of that tyrant. What of that ministry that procured a code of coercion, by which civil liberty is suspended; and afterwards exceeded that code of coercion, and went fairly and openly to sword-work? Does he, do any of them set up the liberty of Ireland against those who would advise His Majesty to look to his empire, and, to the state of Ireland, threatening that empire? What is the liberty they advance? The liberty he has voted her; the liberty of sending the Irish aboard a tender, without judge or jury; the liberty of putting the middling people in gaol, without judge or jury; the liberty of taking away the liberty of the Irish. In short it is on the part of government, the liberty of dragooning the people; and on the part of the people, the privilege of being imprisoned without law, transported without law, and disarmed without law. "Do not interfere," says a British

minister, with my civil war in Ireland, my sale of the peerage, my proscription of the Catholics, my military government. Let me use the name of England, the power of England, and the arms of England, and involve the fate of England, to tread down Ireland; but do not let the Parliament of England question me in this abuse of her name, this prostitution of her power, and this felonious application of her arms." Thus the ministry of England set up the constitution against the empire, and the empire against the constitution. On all questions of trade and constitution they argue with you as with a secondary country; they bear down the particular interest of Ireland by advancing the general interest of the empire; they bear down Irish constitution by the pretext of British connection. Having rendered British connection less popular by such artifice, and having created an alarm in certain British senators for the state of the connection, and having thus induced them to move the King to advert to the connection; they then set up the constitution, the constitution they have destroyed, against the connection they have endangered! They are in the double and destructive habit of setting the name against the substance, the name of liberty against any interference for its recovery, the name of the connection against such measures as would render the connection potent and popular; they make each destructive to itself, and both destructive to one another. This kind of doctrine, it is their doctrine, it is his doctrine, would produce a minister perfectly uncontrollable and irresponsible; to Ireland irresponsible from absence, to England from sophistry; physically irresponsible to one country, sophistically irresponsible to the other; that is, an enemy to both. Such a minister would be a monster, the spring of every executive action, and with the executive power of both; in fact (though not in right) the creator of your executive, the salient source of every water of bitterness that has overflowed this country. He who decides in effect your religious questions, your reform questions, your commercial, your financial questions, has decided them most wickedly; is only to be assailable by the curses of the people! Such a minister is a tyrant!

Doctor Duigenan replied; but the order of the day was carried without a division, and his motion consequently was lost.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

MR. W. B. PONSONBY PROPOSES HIS RESOLUTIONS ON REFORM.

May 15. 1797.

ON this day, Mr. W. B. Ponsonby, in pursuance of notice, brought forward his motion on reform. The resolutions he submitted were as follows:

"Resolved, That it is indispensably necessary to a fundamental reform of the representation, that all disabilities, on account of religion, be for ever abolished, and that Catholics shall be admitted into the legislature, and all the great offices of state, in the same extent, &c. as Protestants now are.

"That it is the indispensable right of the people of Ireland, to be fully and fairly represented in Parliament.

"That in order that the people may be fully enabled to exercise that right, the privilege of returning members for cities, boroughs, &c. in the present form, shall cease; that each county be divided into districts, consisting of 6000 houses each, each district to return two members to Parliament.

"That all persons possessing freehold property to the amount of forty pounds per annum; all possessed of leasehold interests, of the annual value of ; all possessed of a house of the value of ; all who have resided for a certain number of years in any great city, or town, following a trade; and, all who shall be free of any city, &c. by birth, marriage, or servitude, shall vote for members of Parliament.

"That seats in Parliament shall endure for number of years."

[The blanks were left to be filled up by the discretion of the House.]

Mr. Pelham moved the question of adjournment. The original motion was opposed by Mr. Denis Browne, Mr. Marcus Beresford, Mr. Jephson, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Sir Frederick Flood, Mr. C. Osborne, and Mr. W. Smith. They argued that, in the present situation of the country, it was not prudent to agitate the question; a dangerous conspiracy existed, and part of the kingdom was in a state of rebellion, and this must be put down before any such subjects could be discussed; but, even if these measures, reform and Catholic emancipation, were yielded, the people would not be satisfied; revolution was the real object of the United Irishmen, and reform and emancipation were mere pretences.

It was supported by Mr. Stewart, Sir John Freke, Mr. G. Ponsonby, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Hoare, Mr. Curran, and Mr. Grattan. They said that the discontents of the people had been, in a great degree, occasioned by the resistance of government to constitutional and conciliatory measures; government had tried

violent remedies, they had resorted to the most severe laws, until they ended by suspending all law, and introducing a military system: The people had called for reform, and, if a wise and moderate reform was granted, one great argument would be taken from the discontented. With respect to the Catholic question; of the policy of this measure there could be little doubt. If these two modes of conciliation were adopted, the people would be gratified, and if they were withheld, the discontents would naturally increase. The convention bill, said Mr. Curran, was passed to punish the meetings at Dungannon, and those of the Catholics; the government considered the Catholic concessions as defeats that called for vengeance, and cruelly have they avenged them. But did that act, or those which followed it, put down those meetings? On the contrary, it concealed them most foolishly. When popular discontents are abroad, a wise government should put them into an hive of glass; you hid them. The association at first was small; the earth seemed to drink it as a rivulet, but it only disappeared for a season. A thousand streams through the secret windings of the earth, found their way to one course, and swelled its waters, until at last, too mighty to be contained, it burst out a great river, terrifying by its cataracts. This was the effect of our penal code; it swelled sedition into rebellion; and what else could be hoped from a system of terrorism. You have tried to force the people; but the rage of your penal laws was a storm that only drove them in groups to shelter. I know I am censured heavily for having acted for them in the late prosecutions; I feel no shame at such a charge, except that, at such a time as this, to defend the people should be held out as an imputation upon a King's counsel, when the people are prosecuted by the state. I think every counsel is the property of his fellow-subjects. If, indeed, because I wore His Majesty's gown, I had declined my duty, or done it weakly or treacherously; if I had made that gown a mantle of hypocrisy, and betrayed my client, or sacrificed him to any personal view, I might, perhaps, have been thought wiser by those who have blamed me; but I should have thought myself the basest villain upon earth.

Mr. Fletcher (afterwards Judge), said that the plan proposed did not innovate on the constitution, but went to correct abuses of modern introduction; the greater part of the boroughs in Ireland were created by the House of Stuart for the purposes of patronage; and unless the essence of the British constitution be corruption, the reform of that House cannot subvert it.

Mr. GRATTAN observed: That the gentlemen who object to the motion, rely on a cavil, which supposes the motion admitted the Roman Catholics into the church, as well as the state and the Parliament. They know the motion does no such thing; it propounds that disabilities should cease, and then it expresses what those disabilities are, viz. "disabilities

to sit in Parliament, or hold offices of state." It states a general principle of concord, and applies that principle to the only points to which it is applicable, civil, military, and political situations; and the objection can have no other view than to excite an apprehension in the church, and create false alarm under pretext of religion. Of the same kind is that other objection which would excite an alarm for the rights and privileges of cities and corporate towns. What are the rights and privileges of cities and corporate towns to return members to serve in Parliament? nothing; except in a few cities and towns no such right exists. The proprietors of boroughs have taken that right away; they have made public right private property; they have left indeed to the town the name of the return, and have imposed on the town the hardship and insult of their own nomination. These are the persons who now call out for the rights and privileges of cities and corporate towns; persons who would not be in this House if they had not usurped those rights and those privileges, and who now object to this plan, not because it abolishes, but because it restores to cities and towns those rights which they themselves abolished, and do not like to restore. We have considered the state of towns and cities, and find there are not twelve which are free; and with regard to such, instead of abolishing the right of representation, we have by the plan *greatly extended it*; for in large and free cities, instead of two members, the return would be more. For instance, in Dublin, it would be perhaps eight; in Cork, perhaps four; in every city or town which contained 5000 houses, two; in every city or town which contained less, the proportion of representation would be according to the proportion of houses, in which cities or towns every person having a house of a certain value for a certain time, as well as every person exercising a trade for a certain time, would have a vote. So that this plan, which the objectors say excludes great towns and cities, not only includes them in a greater proportion of elective power than at present, but includes within the limits of such places, several descriptions of persons who were before totally excluded; includes not only more commercial towns, but includes what the borough system excluded, commercial property and commercial population. We had two ideas with respect to certain great towns and cities, one was to preserve them as they are, the other to extend over them the operation of the plan; the latter was thought preferable, because it increased the number of representatives for such great cities and towns. If, however, gentlemen wish to except them they may. If they

do, I shall persist to think it necessary, however, to add to the present number of representatives for such great towns and cities.

I beg to observe, that there is a special provision for the university in the plan, which, by accident, is omitted in the paper. Gentlemen then proceed to object to the plan on other grounds, or rather attempt to excite an alarm with respect to it on no ground at all. Gentlemen say, it establishes an aristocracy; the same gentlemen say, it establishes a democracy; that is, an alarm at all events is to be created, whether at democratic or aristocratic encroachment. How it can at once establish an aristocracy and democracy, they who make the double objection will explain. But, making the double objection, it would be unnecessary to reply to either, if the inconsistent men who so contradict themselves, were alone concerned; but for the subject it is proper that both objections should be canvassed. And, first, that of aristocracy; the plan proposed that no district should send members to Parliament, which did not contain a number not less than 5000 houses; is that aristocracy? In such a district every person having a tenure for a certain time and to a certain amount, having a house of a certain value and term, exercising a trade for a certain time and resident, must have a vote; so that the number of voters could hardly be less than from 3 to 5000; is that aristocracy? The number of votes in the city of Dublin at the last election, did not exceed 3000; the electors in many of the counties did not amount to so many. To suppose a district containing such a number, capable of becoming the borough of an individual, is a very improbable supposition, and contains in it another supposition, viz. that there is in some landed proprietors a gigantic property; which, however, if so, must have influence in any plan of reform; an influence not arising from the nature of the plan, but from the extent of the property. What then do gentlemen complain of? Do they call for an Agrarian law as the companion of a reform; or do they call for such a reform as shall prevent land and property from having their constant and invariable influences? Who are the gentlemen that complain of aristocracy? The representatives of twelve burgesses, or of certain noble lords. They complain of the aristocratic nature of a plan which extends the right of election, from a borough of twelve burgesses, to a district of 5000 voters. Would then 5000 voters, or 3000, or 4000, be the private friends, or companions, or servants of a great patron? No. What then can be the motive of such an objection on the part of the borough proprietors? What,

but that this plan does not save the aristocracy; that is, it is not a little plan that saves a remnant of the patron's interest in his borough; that should leave one way what it takes away in another; that should compromise reform; and, while it speaks plausibly to the people, would perpetuate the mischief; that is, this plan is not a fallacious reform of Parliament. Had it been such a reform, it would have encountered less the fury of the patrons of boroughs, and their opposition is an argument of the integrity of the plan, a proof that it goes to the root, that it is not a half measure; which presumption is confirmed by their second objection, viz. that their plan introduces democracy. This objection, to be understood, requires to be explained. If by democracy they mean the people, the plan does introduce the people; and it would not be a reform of the Commons House of Parliament if it did not introduce the people. What are the Commons? Are they the King and the lords, or the representatives of King and lords? Or, what is the House of Commons if it is not the House of the people? To this charge, therefore, the plan pleads guilty; and it would be a criminal experiment indeed, on the confidence of the country, if it did not incur that species of guilt. But if by the people, gentlemen mean the rabble, they are too apt to call the people the rabble, and decry both under the name of the latter. I say, if, by the people, gentlemen mean the rabble, the plan is innocent of such an experiment; to landholders, leaseholders, householders, and resident tradesmen, the plan communicates the right of voting; that is, population certainly; but that is population mixed with property, and annexed to residence; that is, in short, the people. What! have gentlemen thought proper that forty-shilling freeholders should have votes, and will they exclude farmers for years, householders and leaseholders of a higher amount, and established and resident tradesmen? They think, it would seem, that the mass of property should be as little represented as the mass of population; that representation should be founded on neither, but should itself be, what it is, a property and a commerce. I think I have answered the objections of aristocracy and of democracy.

Gentlemen have omitted to state their objections to other parts of this plan, to the exclusion of placemen and pensioners, and to the limitation of the duration of Parliament; and yet those parts of the plan have had their weight, I doubt not, in procuring enemies to the plan, on these aristocratic ideas. But these are ideas not very popular to borough-majorities. The heavy terms that have been used against the plan, "Subversion of the constitution, its fabric,

its pillars; annihilation to all its principles; ruinous to the government; and incompatible with the safety of the kingdom;" are idle words to be expected from those who talk on a subject without understanding it, or who profess to be friendly to the principle of parliamentary reform, but are hostile to it in every possible shape. On such condition any borough patron, may be a friend to reform. Such general invective means nothing but an indisposition to any kind of reform which shall be radical and popular, and such treatment has every reform received. The reform proposed in 1783, for instance; the reform proposed in 1785; and the reform proposed in 1793. Against these reforms there were three objections: they were too narrow; they were too broad; and they were offered at an improper time. There are two periods, it seems, in which reform should not be agitated; one is the period of war, and the other that of peace; any other time is seasonable; for you will never persuade a borough majority that it is seasonable for them to surrender their borough interest, or to give up their boroughs to the people. Gentlemen do not only impeach the present plan; they defend the system of boroughs — it is the old and venerable fabric. I deny it: the greater part of our boroughs has been created since the accession of the house of Stuart; the number created by that family were about seventy-seven; forty of which were created at a stroke by James I. Of these, Dr. Leland very justly says, they were so poor that they could not pay their members; their members were attornies' clerks, and the servants of the lord-lieutenant; and their effect was, that the king did what he pleased in Parliament. They were created for the purpose of modelling Parliament; that is, of subverting the parliamentary constitution. Those created afterwards, were with a view to serve the private views of individuals, or to answer the ambition of a religious faction. Thus, by far the greater number of your boroughs, and near one half of your representation is not your ancient constitution, but a gross and flagrant encroachment, and a violent usurpation of the worst family that ever trampled on the independency and fabric of representation. You banished that family for other usurpations; and you retain that usurpation which banished the people out of Parliament. But, gentlemen add, that this borough constitution has worked well; a constitution of representation composed of 300 members, above 200 of whom are returned by venal and close boroughs; a representation where the minister is supposed to have obtained a complete ascendancy by means of such boroughs; where that minister is only the representative of the cabinet of another country!

Such a constitution must be a foreign yoke. How did it work? It set out under James I. with the destruction of liberty and property; in the seizure, on the part of the Crown, of the lands of individuals under grants of Henry II., and confirmed by the possession of centuries; it proceeded, under Charles I. to an attempt to confiscate all Connaught, and the government to an actual confiscation of some part of it, attended with all the violent measures under Strafford, for which he afterwards suffered death. How did the borough Parliament act on such an occasion? It granted the deputy an extraordinary supply, and recorded in the bill of supply an extraordinary panegyric, and afterwards impeached him for those acts for which they had just praised him in so extraordinary a manner.

What followed under a borough Parliament? Surrender in the next reign of the revenues of the public to the Crown for ever, succeeded by a three-fold proscription; the proscription of your inhabitants by your penal laws; of your commerce by the acts of William; and of Parliament itself by the 6th of George I. This was no beneficial working on the part of a borough constitution, and this lasted near one hundred years. Well; you recovered your trade and your independency. How has a borough Parliament exercised that independency in the regulation of that trade? She has regulated on the provincial principle, on the colonial tariff: that tariff has been dictated by the cabinet of another country. She has regulated a free trade on the principle of dependency. I demand, then, whether the services which a borough Parliament has rendered our commerce are a compensation for the injuries a borough Parliament has done our constitution? Am I to forget the sums of money she has granted without compensation in constitution, and the injuries lately done to the constitution, without any compensation in commerce? Gentlemen, however, are too prudent to rely entirely either on their objections to our plan, or on their praise of their borough constitution. And they tell us that this is not the time for its reformation; viz. a time of invasion and insurrection; and yet I do not see that they have made any preparation against invasion so powerful as the reform of Parliament would be. No; I do not find that the state of their revenue is such, nor their new levies so rapid (they have made none), as to leave them any other chance of combating invasion, save only by the people; nor do I see they have any chance of uniting the people to combat invasion, save only by reforming the Parliament. The borough patron will not give up his property; the British minister will not give up his property in the re-

presentation of the people, in ordinary times, and out of mere andpure good will, and preference of popular power to their own private power, and their own political power; it must be in the moment of emergency and of panic; and, therefore, when gentlemen propose to wait for the leisure and security of a minister or a borough-monger, to consider a self-denying, self-surrendering constitution; they deserve but little credit for the sincerity of their objection. With respect to insurrection, the original cause of discontent is to be found lodged in the inadequate representation of our people. I do not then see any remedy for insurrection, so natural, nor indeed any remedy at all for the principle of insurrection, save only the removal of the cause of it by the reform of the representation. The British Parliament did not argue in the spirit of this objection with respect to the fleet; nor did they argue in the same way with respect to your declaration of right or claim of free trade; nor did you argue in the same way when you yielded to the Catholic convention.

Dignity has listened to the complaints of the people in times when these complaints have been the least reserved, and has not often listened to them at any other time. But gentlemen chiefly rely on the report of the secret committee, and alledge that a conspiracy appears from that report to have established itself in a way so extensive and formidable, as to render any conciliatory measure inadmissible. "They must be subdued before they shall be relieved;" such are the words of gentlemen; dangerous and inconsiderate words! But from that very report I draw a conclusion diametrically opposite; from that report I conclude, that parliamentary reform is not merely eligible, but absolutely indispensable. In that report, and from the speeches of gentlemen, we learn that a conspiracy has existed for some years; that it was composed originally of persons of no powerful or extensive influence; and yet these men, under prosecution and discountenance, have been so extended as to reach every county in the kingdom; to levy a great army; to provide arms and ammunition; and to alarm, as the report states, the existence of the government with the number of its proselytes, procured by these two popular subjects — parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation. It appears, then, that they have recruited by these topics, and have spread their influence, notwithstanding your system of coercion, every where; that, notwithstanding your convention bill of 1793, it passed that year; that this convention has grown; that, notwithstanding your gunpowder act, it has armed and increased its military stores under that act; that, notwithstanding your insurrection act, (another bill to disarm,)

it has greatly added to its magazines; and that, notwithstanding the suspension of the Habeas Corpus bill, and General Lake's proclamation, it has multiplied its proselytes. I should have asked, had I been on the secret committee, whether the number of United Irishmen had not increased very much *since* General Lake's proclamation, *and by* General Lake's proclamation. It appears, I say, from that report, that just as your system of coercion advanced, the United Irishmen advanced; that the measures you took to coerce, strengthened; to disperse, collected; to disarm, armed; to render them weak and odious, made them popular and powerful; whereas, on the other hand, you have loaded Parliament and government with the odium of an oppressive system, and with the further odium of rejecting these two popular topics which you allow are the most likely to gain the heart of the nation, and be the beloved objects of the people. In short, you have given to the United Irishmen the popularity of suffering under acts of power, and the popularity of offering acts of privilege. What, then, remains but to reverse your conduct, and offer to your people those acts of privilege? Those acts which you allow, while you alledge they are the pretext of some committees, are the great object of the nation. By such, I say, if you cannot reconcile all, you will reconcile the nation; you will take from the United Irishmen their proselytes; you will annex these proselytes to Parliament; and though you may not annex every man, yet you will annex the people.

Gentlemen are reduced in the course of their argument to the necessity of saying, that the people would not be satisfied with this reform. We have sent our plan to different persons who are much in the confidence of the people, and to persons who have a great lead among the different sects of our fellow-citizens. They have considered the plan, and have consulted with one another, and have returned us for answer, that the plan submitted would be highly agreeable to them. I have in my hand a paper signed by nine hundred persons, considerable men in business, and northern merchants, containing the following resolutions in substance: "That they conceive the cause of the present discontent to be the miserable state of the representation; that the discontent and suffering will continue until Parliament shall be reformed; and that they will persist in the pursuit of that object, and will not lose sight of it by cavils at the plan, but will expect and be satisfied with such a plan as does substantially restore to the community the right of electing the House of Commons, securing its independence against the influence of the Crown; limiting the duration of Parliament; and extending to his Majesty's

subjects the privileges of the constitution, without distinction of religion." Such a plan we offer you; that is our plan of peace, our idea of strength and union against a foreign enemy. We conceive that all your other plans have failed; you tried them: you tried your revenue, and you failed; you tried your public credit, it has failed; you tried your armed force, it has failed; you have attempted to combat democracy by armies, and you failed; you sent armies against your enemies to combat that principle, and you failed; you sent armies against your people, and you failed. You conquered your laws indeed; you conquered the person of the subject, but you could not subdue his mind; you could not conquer the passion or the principle; on the contrary you inflamed both; what then remains? Try this plan. Reform the Parliament; let the King identify with his people; there is his strength; let him share with them, or rather let them share with him, the blessings of the constitution; as they have given him the powers of government, let him restore to them the rights of self-legislation; without that they have no liberty, and without full and free representation in the Commons they have not that; they have the name indeed, but they have not the substance. There are in our constitution three great presidencies or chairs; the throne, the chair of the nobles, and the chair of the Commons, that is the chair, or what should be the chair of the people. — The King, — he will reign long and securely, because the peers and the people, in securing to him the possession of his seat, secure to themselves the possession of theirs. But if he shall be advised to take possession of the three chairs, and endeavour to set himself in all of them, his situation is precarious and unnatural, and the situation of his people is in the condition of bondsmen. Such a people have no political pride nor political interest to defend, and therefore such a people will not be enthusiasts to defend the throne against its enemies, foreign and domestic. The privileges of the constitution were the protection of the people against the King, they are now the armour of the King against democracy. In this opinion we have submitted our plan, and we have deprecated yours. What is your plan? There are but two measures in the country, — reform or force. We have offered you the former; you seem inclined to the latter. Let us consider it: "To subdue, to coerce, to establish unqualified submission;" an arduous, a precarious undertaking! Have you well weighed all its consequences? Is there not much of passion in your judgment? Have you not lost your temper a little in the contest? I am sure you have shown this night symptoms of irritation — a certain impatience of the com-

plaints of the people. So it was in the American business. Nothing less in that contest than their unconditional submission. Alas! what was the consequence? As far as you have tried your experiment here, it has failed; the report shows you it has failed. It has increased the evil it would restrain; it has propagated the principle it would punish; but if repeated and invigorated you think it will have more success; I apprehend not. Do not you perceive, that instead of strengthening monarchy by constitutional principles, you are attempting to give it force by despotic ones? That you are giving the new principle the advantage of success abroad and of suffering at home, and that you are losing the people, while you think you are strengthening the throne; that you have made a false alliance with unnatural principles, and instead of identifying with the people, you identify with abuses?

Before they are to be reformed, rebellion, you tell us, must be subdued. You tried that experiment in America; America required self-legislation; you attempted to subdue America by force of angry laws, and by force of arms; you exacted of America unconditional submission; the stamp act and the tea tax were only pretexts; so you said. The object, you said, was separation, so here the reform of parliament, you say, and Catholic emancipation are only pretexts; the object, you say, is separation, and here you exact unconditional submission — "YOU MUST SUBDUE BEFORE YOU REFORM." Indeed! Alas! you think so; but you forget you subdue by reforming; it is the best conquest you can obtain over your own people; but let me suppose you succeed, what is your success? — *a military government, a perfect despotism, an hapless victory* over the principles of a mild government and a mild constitution! *a Union!* but what may be the ultimate consequence of such a victory? A separation!

Let us suppose that the war continues, and that your conquest over your own people is interrupted by a French invasion; what would be your situation then? I do not wish to think of it, but I wish you to think of it, and to make a better preparation against such an event than such conquests and such victories. When you consider the state of your arms abroad, and the ill-assured state of your government at home, precipitating on such a system, surely you should pause a little: even on the event of a peace, you are ill-secured against a future war, which the state of Ireland, under such a system, would be too apt to invite; but on the event of the continuation of the war, your system is perilous indeed. I speak without asperity; I speak without resentment; I speak, perhaps, my delusion; but it is my heart-felt conviction; I speak my apprehension

for the immediate state of our liberty, and for the ultimate state of the empire. I see, or imagine I see, in this system, every thing which is dangerous to both; I hope I am mistaken; at least I hope I exaggerate; possibly I may. If so, I shall acknowledge my error with more satisfaction than is usual in the acknowledgment of error. I cannot, however, banish from my memory, the lesson of the American war; and yet at that time English government was at the head of Europe, and was possessed of resources comparatively unbroken; if that lesson has no effect on ministers, surely I can suggest nothing that will. We have offered you our measure, you will reject it; we deprecate yours; you will persevere; having no hopes left to persuade or dissuade, and having discharged our duty, we shall trouble you no more, and AFTER THIS DAY SHALL NOT ATTEND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS!

Lord Castlereagh after complimenting Mr. Grattan on the ability and temperance of his speech, declared that he was not averse to a wise and well-digested plan of reform, if brought forward at a proper season, but the period of the session was too late to entertain the measure, and the state of the country too disturbed.

The question being put, the House divided. For the adjournment;—Ayes 117, Noes 30; Majority against Mr. Ponsonby's motion 87. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. J. Stewart and Mr. Fox; for the Noes, Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan.

SECESSION OF THE OPPOSITION.

May, 1797.

AFTER this debate the leaders of the opposition seceded. The Parliament was prorogued in June and dissolved by proclamation in the August following.

At the ensuing election, Mr. Grattan declined to stand candidate for Dublin, and addressed a letter to his late constituents assigning his reasons. He protested strongly against the violent measures of the government, and withdrew from any further interference in public affairs. His health, in consequence of his close attendance on his parliamentary duties, began now to decline; the calamitous insurrection which broke out, and the horrors which ensued, so disgusted him with politics, that he seemed almost disposed to pass the remainder of his days in retirement; he was, however, quickly roused by the danger which began to

threaten the liberties of the country. In the month of January 1799, His Majesty recommended the subject of union to both Houses of Parliament, in Great Britain and in Ireland. Mr. Sheridan strongly opposed the measure in the House of Commons in England, and moved an amendment to that effect; it was, however, negatived, and a message was sent from His Majesty to the British Parliament, on which Mr. Pitt introduced his Union resolutions, which were read and adopted. The project, however, did not succeed so well in the Irish Parliament. The subject of a Union was indirectly alluded to in a paragraph contained in the speech from the throne, on the 22d of January, on which Mr. G. Ponsonby moved an amendment to the address, declaring "Their intention of maintaining the undoubted birthright of the people of Ireland, to have a free and independent legislature resident within the kingdom, such as was asserted by the Parliament of the kingdom in 1782, and acknowledged and ratified by his Majesty and the Parliament of Great Britain, upon the final adjustment of the differences between the two countries." The amendment was seconded by Sir Laurence Parsons. It was opposed by Lord Castlereagh, Mr. R. Martin, Mr. Corry, Mr. H. D. Grady, Mr. William Smith (afterwards judge), Mr. St. George Daly (afterwards judge), Mr. Osborne (afterwards judge), and the Attorney-general, Mr. Toler (afterwards judge). It was supported by Mr. Plunket, Mr. Frederick Faulkner, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Denis B. Daly, Colonel O'Donnell, Mr. Ogle, Mr. Barrington, Mr. Richard Dawson, Mr. Sanderson, Mr. Charles Ball, Mr. Egan, and Mr. Arthur Browne (member for the University). On a division, the numbers were;— Ayes for the amendment 105, Noes 106; Majority 1.

On the 24th, when the report was brought up, Sir Laurence Parsons moved, that the paragraph which alluded to the masure of Union should be expunged; this brought on another long debate after which a division took place, when there appeared for expunging the paragraph relating to the union; — Ayes 109, Noes 104; Majority against the paragraph 5.

Mr. Ponsonby then proposed the following resolution: "That this House will ever maintain the undoubted birthright of Irishmen, by preserving an independent Parliament of Lords and Commons, resident within this kingdom, as settled and approved by His Majesty and the British Parliament in 1782." This, however, on consideration, was withdrawn, and the measure of union was for this session abandoned. The joy at this defeat was excessive, and the failure of the measure at the outset was so highly approved of by the kingdom, that public addresses were voted from all parts, to those who had opposed it in Parliament, particularly to the Earl Charlemont, Sir John Parnell, Mr. Foster (Speaker), Mr. Plunket, Mr. Barrington, and several other members of both Houses. However, in the interval, between that and the opening of the ensuing session, every engine was set to work, to procure addresses in favour of the Union: threats and promises were held out to every description of individuals from the highest to the lowest; the refusal of sheriffs to call public meetings, to petition

against the measure; the actual interference of the military; the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act; the exercise of martial law; the act passed in the preceding session (called the rebellion act), which enabled the chief magistrate to issue orders to any officer or individual, for summary arrests, and summary trials; all had necessarily great effect upon the minds of the people, and nearly broke down the spirit of the country, and overawed and intimidated the nation. The opposition, however, that was made to the measure was great, and, under these circumstances, it was indeed the more surprising. Petitions from all quarters were presented to Parliament against it, and on the 15th of January, Mr. Grattan was elected for the borough of Wicklow, for the purpose of opposing the measure.

The following is a List of the Members who voted against the Union, on the Motion on the Address, on the 22d and 24th of January, 1799.

Acheson, Hon. A.
Alcock, Wm. C.
Archdall, Mervyn
Babbington, David
Bagwell, John
Bagwell, William
Ball, John
Barrington, Jonah
Beresford, J. C.
Browne, Arthur
Burton, William
Crowe, Robert
Corry, Lord Viscount
Clements, Lord
Cole, Lord
Cole, Hon. Colonel L.
Crookshank, George
Creighton, Hon. A.
Creighton, Hon. J.
Cooper, Jos. Edward
Cane, James
Caulfield, Lord
Coddington, Henry
Daly, Denis Bowes, *Teller*
Dawson, Richard
Dawson, Arthur
Dobbs, Francis
Edgeworth, Richard Lovell
Egan, John
Evans, George
Freke, Sir John, Bart.
Faulkener, Fred. John
Fitzgerald, Right Hon. James
Fortescue, William Charles
Foster, Hon. Thomas
French, Arthur
Gore, William
Gorges, Hamilton
Hamilton, Hans
Handcock, William
Hardman, Edward
Hardy, Francis
Hoare, Sir Joseph
Hamilton, Alexander
Hamilton, Hon. A. C.
Hopkins, Sir Francis
King, Gilbert
King, Charles
King, Hon. Robert
Kingsborough, Lord Viscount
Knox, Hon. George
Knox, Francis
King, Right Hon. Henry
King, John
Latouche, David, jun.
Latouche, John
Latouche, John, jun.
Latouche, Robert
Leslie, Charles Powel
Lee, Edward
Leighton, Sir Thomas
Montgomery, Alexander
Macartney, Sir John
Maxwell, Col. John
Monsel, William Thomas
Moore, Arthur
Matthew, Lord
Metge, John
Neville, Richard
Newenham, Thomas
O'Hara, Charles
Osborne, Henry
O'Brien, Sir Edward
O'Donnell, Hugh
O'Donnell, James M.
O'Callaghan, Hon. W.

Ogle, Right Hon. G.
Preston, John
Preston, Joseph
Parnell, Sir John
Plunket, William Cunningham
Ponsonby, Right Hon. W. B.
Ponsonby, Major W.
Ponsonby, George, *Teller*
Parsons, Sir L. *Teller*
Power, Richard
Ram, Abel
Rochfort, Gustavus
Rochfort, John St:
Richardson, Sir W.
Ruxton, W.
Saunderson, Francis
Smyth, William — Westmeath
Stewart, James
* Stewart, Henry
St. George, Sir Richard
Stratford, Hon. B.
St. Leger, Hon. Barry
Sneyd, Nathaniel
Skeffington, Hon. W. J.
* Savage, Francis
Stannus, Thomas
Tighe, William
Trench, Hon. Richard
Taylor, John
* Taylor, Hon. R.
Tighe, Henry
Townsend, Thomas
Vereker, Charles
Wynne, Owen
Waller, John
Wilson, E. D.

* Thus marked were absent on the first question. — 111 including Tellers.

The following is a List of the Members who voted for the Union, on the Motion on the Address, on the 22d and 24th January, 1799.

Alexander, R.
Alexander, H.
Annesly, R.
Archdall, R.
Bailey, William
* Beresford, Right Hon. J.
Beresford, J. jun.
Beresford, Col. M.
Bingham, J.
Blake, Joseph Henry
Blakeney W.
Blaquiere, Sir J.
Botet, Anthony
Boyd, James
Boyle, Lord
Brown, Right Hon. D.
Bruce, Stewart
Burdett, George
Burgh, T.
Butler, Hon. James
Castlereagh, Lord
Cavendish, G.
Cavendish, Sir H.
Chinnery, Broderick
* Conolly, Right Hon. T.
Cooke, E.
Coote, C. H.
Cornwall, R.
Corry, Right Hon. Isaac
Cotter, Sir J.
Cotter, R.
Crosbie, W. A.
Daly, St. G.
Elliott, William
Eustace, General
Fitzgerald, Lord Charles
Fitzgerald, Robert U. *Teller*
Fitzgerald, M.
Forward, Right Hon. W.
Fortescue, Sir C.
Galbraith, J.
Grady, H. D.
Hare, Richard
Hare, William
Henniker, Col. B.
Holmes, Peter
Hutchinson, Hon. F.
Hutchinson, Hon. M. G.
Howard, Hugh
Jackson, Col. G.
Jephson, Den.
Jocelyn, Hon. J.
Johnston, R.
Jones, W.
* Jones, Theophilus
Kavanagh, Thomas
Keane, John
Kearney, James
Kemmis, Henry
Knott, William
Knox, James
* Langrishe, Right Hon. Sir H.

Lindsay, Thomas, sen.
Lindsay, Thomas, jun.
Longfield, Mont.
Longfield, John
Longfield, Capt. J.
M'Namara, Francis
Mahon, Ross
Martin, Richard
Mason, Right Hon. J. M.
Massey, H. D.
M'Cleland, James, *Teller*
M'Naghton, E. A.
Moore, L.
Moore, S.
Morris, Right Hon. Lodge
Musgrave, Sir R.
Nesbit, Thomas
Newcomen, Sir William
Odell, William
Ormsby, C. M.
Osborne, Charles
Packenham, T.
Roche, Sir Boyle
Rutledge, R.
Shee, Sir George
Skeffington, Hon. H.
Smith, W. T.
Sandford, H. M.
Stanly, Edmond
Staples, John
Stewart, John
Stratton, John
Toler, Right Hon. John
Trench, Frederick
Townsend, J.
Tyrone, Earl of, *Teller*
Tottenham, Charles
Uniacke, Robert
Vandeleur, J. O.
Verner, James
Wemys, Colonel
Westenra, *Henry*
Whaley, *Thomas*
Woodward, Benjamin B.
Yelverton, W.

* Thus marked were absent on the last question — 106 including Tellers.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT. — UNION.

SIR LAURENCE PARSONS MOVES AN AMENDMENT TO THE ADDRESS, EXPRESSIVE OF THE DETERMINATION TO SUPPORT THE FREE CONSTITUTION OF IRELAND, AS ESTABLISHED IN 1782.

January 15. 1800.

ON this day the Parliament met, when the session was opened by the Lord-lieutenant (Cornwallis), with the following speech from the throne to both Houses of Parliament:

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"I have received His Majesty's commands to assemble you in Parliament.

"Upon a review of the important and glorious events that have distinguished the period which has elapsed since I last addressed you, the most gratifying and encouraging reflections present themselves to our consideration.

'By the brilliant course of victories achieved by the combined imperial armies, the various kingdoms and states of Italy have been delivered from the ravages and the tyranny of the French.

"The throne of Naples, and our friendly connection with that kingdom, have been restored.

"The French expedition to Egypt has been checked in its career by the exertions of the Turkish arms, assisted by a small detachment of His Majesty's forces, and the gallantry of their heroic commander.

"The hostile plans of the common enemy in India have terminated in the total destruction of the power which had been misled by their artifices, and through the timely, vigorous, and decisive counsels of the Marquis Wellesley, and the consummate skill and valour of His Majesty's generals, officers, and troops, the British possessions in that quarter of the globe have been beneficially extended and effectually secured.

"By the descent of His Majesty's forces and of his Russian allies on the coast of Holland, the Dutch fleet has been happily rescued from the power of the enemy; and although the season, peculiarly unfavourable to military operations, produced the necessity of relinquishing an enterprize so fortunately begun, and prevented the complete accomplishment of His Majesty's views, yet the result of that expedition has been peculiarly beneficial to this kingdom, in removing all fear of attack on our coasts from a quarter whence it had been so often planned, and in enabling His Majesty's fleets to direct their vigilance exclusively to the single port from which the enemy can attack this country with any hope even of a temporary success.

"My utmost care has been exerted to carry into execution the extraordinary powers which you have committed to my discretion with vigour, and, at the same time, with moderation; all tendency to insurrection has been effectually repressed; but it gives me true concern to acquaint you, that the painful necessity of acting with severity has been too frequently imposed upon me; and although public tranquillity has been in a great measure restored, yet I have to lament that a disposition to outrage and conspiracy still continues in several districts; that much industry is used to keep alive the spirit of disaffection, and to encourage among the lower classes the hopes of French assistance.

"I trust that the recent revolution in France cannot fail to open the eyes of such of His Majesty's subjects as have been deluded by the artifices which have been unremittingly employed to withdraw them from their allegiance, and that it will restore and increase the love of constitutional order and of regulated freedom, by demonstrating that the principles of false liberty tend ultimately to despotism, and that the criminal struggles of democratic faction naturally close in military usurpation.

"So long as the French government, under whatever form it exerts its influence, shall persevere in schemes of destruction and projects of ambition, subversive at once of the liberties of Europe and of the security of His Majesty's dominions, there can be no wise alternative but to prosecute the war with increasing energy. It is by great exersions alone that either their views of aggrandizement can be frustrated, or a solid peace procured.

"His Majesty has therefore availed himself, with peculiar satisfaction, of the cordial and great assistance which has been afforded him by his faithful ally the Emperor of Russia, and has thought right to make every exertion for augmenting the disposeable military force of his own dominions; His Majesty, therefore, has been highly gratified in accepting the services so generously offered by his English militia, and I am to express to you the entire confidence which His Majesty feels that the zeal and loyalty of his militia of this kingdom, in forwarding at this important crisis the active operations of the empire, will not be less prompt and conspicuous.

"The apprehensions of general scarcity which some time since took place, called for my early attention to this most important subject; and I was induced, with the advice of the council, to offer premiums for the early importation of grain. This measure will, I flatter myself, meet your approbation; and I have full confidence in your wisdom, if it shall be necessary to resort to any further extraordinary means for procuring a supply.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

"The evident necessity of securing this kingdom from every danger, whether foreign or domestic, and of rendering the success of invasion, if attempted, impracticable, will demonstrate to you, the wisdom of continuing that enlarged system of defence you have so wisely adopted.

"I have, therefore, ordered the public accounts and estimates for the ensuing year to be laid before you, and have the fullest confidence that in the supply which such a situation shall appear to you to require, you will equally consult the safety of the kingdom, and the honour of His Majesty's government.

"I am induced to hope that the great increase of the revenue which has taken place in the present year, may enable you to raise the sums which may be wanted for the current services without any distressing addition to the burthens of the people.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"I recommend to your usual attention the agriculture, the manufactures, and particularly the linen manufacture of Ireland; and I doubt not that the Protestant charter schools, and those public institutions, whether of charity or education, which have been protected by your liberality, will still receive a judicious encouragement.

"It will be for your wisdom to consider, how far it will be necessary to continue any of those extraordinary powers with which you have strengthened the authority of His Majesty's government for the more effectual suppression and punishment of rebellious conspiracy and outrage.

"His Majesty places the most entire reliance upon your firmness and wisdom, and he has no doubt that you will anxiously pursue such measures as shall be best calculated for bringing the present war to an honourable termination, and for restoring the country to permanent tranquillity.

"It will be my constant object to attend to your suggestions

and advice, that I may by this means most beneficially accomplish the commands I have received from His Majesty, and most effectually forward the interests and happiness of this kingdom."

Lord Loftus moved an address of thanks in answer to the speech. He was seconded by Colonel Crosbie; neither the mover or seconder introduced the subject of the Union. They adverted to the late successes of the allies over the French; to the victory of Lord Nelson at the Nile; and to the zeal and loyalty of the militia in the late insurrection.

Sir Laurence Parsons (afterwards Lord Rosse), desired that the Lord-lieutenant's speech at the conclusion of the preceding session should be read. He said that speech recommended an incorporating Union with England. The minister had prevented the House from giving an answer to His Majesty at that time, by a sudden prorogation, and by omitting any mention of the subject; and he now wished to prevent their giving an answer at all. He had employed the most unwarrantable means to pervert the sentiments of Parliament on that subject. He had used the prerogative of the Crown in appointing places to corrupt and pack the House of Commons: that while the country was covered with armies greater than were ever known before; while martial law prevailed, the English ministers hoped to destroy the independency of Ireland. That the internal legislation of Ireland had been secured by the original contract of Henry II., and by the great charter of King John; that it had been ratified by Henry III., consecrated by a usage of 600 years, and confirmed by the final settlement of 1782; that neither the short paroxysm of rebellion, nor their unfortunate religious divisions should so subdue their spirits as to make them surrender the rights of their country; that they should not suffer themselves to be deluded by the idea that the trade of the country would be extended, or that English capitalists would come over to settle in Ireland; on the contrary, the Irish absentees would be greatly increased by a Union: that Great Britain would lose her best security if the Irish Parliament was destroyed; that the country was too great to be ruled by an external Parliament; that the constitution which had protected the country for so many ages should be suffered to exist; and if they removed the Parliament, they abandoned their country. He concluded by moving the following amendment:

"Humbly to assure His Majesty that this kingdom is inseparably united with Great Britain, and that it is the sentiment, wish, and real interest of all His Majesty's subjects, that it ever shall continue so united, in the full enjoyment of the blessings of a free constitution, in the support of the honour and dignity of His Majesty's crown, and in the preservation and advancement of the welfare and prosperity of the whole empire; which blessings of a free constitution we owe to the spirited assertion of this kingdom, of its birthright to a free and independent Parliament resident within it, and to the parental kindness of Your Majesty, and the liberality of the British Parliament ratifying the same in the year 1782,

and which we have at all times felt, and do now particularly feel it our bounden duty to maintain."

The amendment was seconded by Mr. Francis Savage, who declared, that the sentiments of the county which he and the noble lord (Castlereagh) represented, were decidedly against the Union.

The amendment was opposed by Lord Castlereagh, Mr. David Latouche, Mr. Denis Browne, Mr. Martin, Mr. Bagwell, jun. Mr. Prendergast, Sir Boyle Roche, Sir John Blaquiere, Mr. Browne (of the college), the Attorney-general (Mr. Toler, afterwards judge), the Prime-sergeant (Mr. Daly, afterwards judge), Mr. Fox (afterwards judge), Mr. Osborne (afterwards judge), and Mr. W. Smith (afterwards judge). Lord Castlereagh stated, that it was the intention of government, to make the Union the subject of a distinct communication to Parliament. The question had been given up in the preceding session, to enable the country to decide on its merits, and he asserted that a great proportion of the country were favourable to the measure. The arguments advanced by the government party in favour of the measure were chiefly as follows: That the country was in an unsettled state, and that the late disturbances showed, that separation from England was a possible event, and a Union was the best mode to guard against such an evil; they denied that the settlement of 1782 was final. They contended, that, in point of trade and revenue, Ireland would be a gainer; that English merchants would come over and settle in Ireland, and introduce their capital, and that the taxes of the nation would be diminished.

The amendment was supported by Mr. James Fitzgerald (late Prime-sergeant), Sir John Parnell (late Chancellor of the Exchequer), Mr. O'Hara, Mr. Ogle, Mr. George Ponsonby, Mr. Charles Bushe, Mr. J. M. O'Donnell, Mr. Francis Hardy, Mr. Arthur Moore, Mr. Dobbs, Mr. W. Conyngham Plunket, Mr. Barrington, Mr. Egan. They contended, that the settlement in 1782 was final; that the institution of Parliament had existed in Ireland upwards of 600 years; that, instead of tending to separation, it cemented the connection between the two countries. That, in 1782, when more than 80,000 volunteers were in arms; when invasion was threatened; and when England had lost her American empire, Ireland did not think of separation, she stood firm by England, she stood by her Parliament; by that body the country obtained the octennial bill, the mutiny bill, the repeal of Poyning's law, the independence of her judges, the restoration of her appellant jurisdiction, her free trade, and, finally, her free constitution; that the local and internal improvements of the country, were owing to her resident Parliament and her resident gentry. They charged the government with resorting to terror and artifice, in order to obtain supporters for this measure; that the names of individuals had been forged to petitions. The Catholics had been tempted by the hope that their claims would be acceded to in the imperial Parliament; that the Protestants had been terrified by the idea that those claims would be acceded to by an Irish

Parliament; that the people had been thus artfully divided; sect was set up against sect; the pastor against his flock; and the landlord against his tenant. Men noted for disloyalty were protected and favoured by government, for having procured signatures in favour of the Union. They further stated, that while the Habeas Corpus act was still suspended, and martial law was still in existence, and an overwhelming military force in the country, and before the nation had recovered from the effects of the late rebellion, such a measure should not be brought forward. That the government had resorted to the most unconstitutional measures, to influence members; that the Prime Sergeant and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been dismissed, because they entertained sentiments different from the government. That members had been forced to accept the nominal office of Escheater of Munster; that when the House was thus thinned, it was recruited from the English staff; that officers and persons who had neither rank, interest, or stake in the country, were brought into Parliament for the purpose of subverting the constitution.

Mr. Plunket, Mr. Ponsonby, and Mr. Charles Bushe, spoke in the most animated and eloquent strain in defence of the liberties of Ireland.

Mr. Egan had just risen to speak, when Mr. Grattan entered the House, supported (in consequence of illness) by Mr. W. B. Ponsonby and Mr. Arthur Moore.* He took the oaths and his seat, and after Mr. Egan had concluded, in consequence of illness being obliged to speak sitting, he addressed the House as follows:—

Sir, The gentleman who spoke last but one (Mr. Fox) has spoken the pamphlet of the English minister — I answer that minister. He has published two celebrated productions, in both of which he declares his intolerance of the constitution of Ireland. He concurs with the men whom he has hanged, in thinking the constitution a grievance, and differs from them in the remedy only; they, proposing to substitute a republic, and he proposing to substitute the yoke of the British Parliament; the one turns rebel to the king, the minister a rebel to the constitution.

We have seen him inveigh against their projects, let us hear him in defence of his own; he denies in the face of the two nations a public fact registered and recorded; he disclaims the final adjustment of 1782, and he tells you that this final adjustment was no more than an incipient train of negotiation. The settlement of which I speak, consists of

* The reporters who have transmitted the account of the debates of the day, state, "Never was beheld a scene more solemn; an indescribable emotion seized the House and gallery, and every heart heaved in tributary pulsation to the name, the virtues, and the return to Parliament of the founder of the constitution of 1782; the existence of which was then the subject of debate."

several parts, every part a record, establishing on the whole two grand positions. First, the admission of Ireland's claim to be legislated by no other Parliament but that of Ireland. Secondly, the finality imposed upon the two nations, regarding all constitutional projects affecting each other. On the admission of that claim, the first tracts of this adjustment are two messages sent by His Majesty to the Parliament of the different countries, to come to a final adjustment, in order to remove the discontents and jealousies of the Irish; the second, the answer of the Parliament of Ireland to His Majesty's message, declaring, among other causes of discontent and jealousy, one great, capital, principal, and fundamental cause, namely, the interposition of the Parliament of Great Britain in the legislative regulation of Ireland, accompanied with a solemn protest against that interposition, and with a claim of right on the part of Ireland; not of the Parliament, of Ireland only, but of the people of the realm, whose ancient and unalienable inheritance, it was stated in that address to be — a perpetual exemption against the interference of the Parliament of Great Britain, or that of any other Parliament, save only the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland. The third part of this adjustment was a resolution voted by the two British Houses of Parliament, in consequence of said address, transmitted by his Majesty for their consideration. There were two resolutions transmitted; the 1st, That the 6th of George I., containing the claim of interference by the British Parliament, should be repealed; the 2d, That the connection between the countries should be placed, by mutual consent, on a solid and permanent foundation; the 3d part of the covenant was, The address of the two Houses of the Irish Parliament, upon the consideration of these two resolutions; which address does, among other things, accept of the proposition contained in the first resolution, and does expressly reject the second; for it says, that we conceive the resolution for unqualified and unconditional repeal of the 6th of George I. to be a measure of consummate wisdom.

I drew that address, and I introduced those words expressly to exclude any subsequent qualifications or limitations, affecting to clog or restrain the operations of that repeal, and the plentitude of the legislative authority of the Irish Parliament. The address adds the clause of finality; for instance, that gratified in those particulars which it states, no "constitutional question between the two nations will any longer exist."

The next part was the measure adopted by the English Parliament upon the consideration of this address; and in that measure, they accede to that address entirely and unequi-

vocally; they embrace our proposition of unconditional and unqualified repeal; and they accordingly introduce a bill for that purpose; and thus they close the final adjustment; our address, though no part of their resolutions, becoming part of their covenant; as their bill of repeal, though no part of our acts, became part of our treaty.

Another instrument in the transaction is, the address to His Excellency the Lord-lieutenant, touching the finality of this measure, in which are these words. — "We have seen this great national arrangement established on a basis which secures and unites the interests of both kingdoms; the objects we have been labouring for have been accomplished."

The next is the declaration of the Irish government, touching the finality of that arrangement, "convince the people that every cause of past jealousy and discontent is finally removed, and that both countries have pledged their good faith to each other, and that their best security will be their inviolable adherence to this compact." There are two other parts which are material; the resolution of the Irish House of Commons, the 18th of June, declaring in substance, that the question was not now to be opened, and that the business was done, and in these words, that leave to bring in a bill of right was refused, because the right of legislation in the Irish Parliament in all cases, had been already asserted by Ireland, and fully, and finally, and irrevocably acknowledged by Great Britain.

The next instrument was an address to His Majesty, to beseech him to appoint a day of public thanksgiving, for the accomplishment of these great objects, as well as for his victories: thus it appears, that whatever idea might have been conceived in the second resolution of the 17th of May, 1782, it was totally and entirely abandoned. The minister of that time probably intended to make the best bargain he could for England, and therefore conceived it eligible to condition and qualify the acknowledgment of the independency of the Irish Parliament, by certain provisions respecting navigation, &c.; but finding that the Irish Parliament would accept of nothing but the unqualified and unconditional repeal, he dropped the fruitless idea. I cannot presume to state his sentiments, but I can state that the Irish propositions of unqualified and unconditional repeal, rejecting the idea of further measures, was adopted in England by her Parliament, which embraced the Irish propositions of unqualified and unconditional repeal of the 6th of George I., and did repeal it accordingly without qualification, condition, or limitation.

I beg leave to mention two facts, which, though not recorded are not forgotten; the one is a declaration by Lord

Lansdowne, then Secretary of State, that the repeal by the 6th of George I. was the only measure he meant to propose; the other was a declaration by the representative of the Irish government, in the Irish House of Commons, made after our address of the 27th of May, that no measures were intended to be grounded on the second English resolution of May 17th. I remember the question to have been asked and so answered.

I think I have now shown, from the records quoted, that the argument of the minister is against the express letter, the evident meaning and honest sense of this final settlement, and I beg leave to repeat that finality was not only a part of the settlement, but one of its principal objects. The case is still stronger against him, finality was the principal object of his country, as legislative independency was the object of ours. Ireland wished to seize the moment of her strength for the establishment of her liberties; the court of England wished to conclude the operations of that strength, and bind its progress. The one country wished to establish her liberty, the other to check the growth of demand; I say the growth of demand; it was the expression of the time. The court of England came, therefore, to an agreement with this country, viz. to establish for ever the free and independent existence of the Irish Parliament, and to preserve for ever the unity of empire. The former, by the above-mentioned adjustment, the latter, by the clause of finality to that adjustment annexed, and by precluding then, and at all times to come, the introduction of any further constitutional questions in either country, affecting the connection which was to rest under solemn convenant, inviolable, impregnable, and invincible to the intrigue, or ambition of either country, founded on the prudent, the profound, the liberal, and the eternal principle of unity of empire, and separation of Parliament.

I might however waive all this, and yet the minister would get nothing; I might allow, contrary to common sense, that final adjustment, as proposed by His Majesty, means incipient negotiation. I will suppose, contrary to truth, to public faith, public honour, and common policy, that the councils of Great Britain at that time meant to leave the Irish constitution open to the encroachments of the British Parliament, and the British empire open to the encroachments of the Irish volunteer; that is, that she meant to expose the solidity of her empire, in order to cheat the Irish, first, of their opportunity, and afterwards of their constitution; and yet he has gained nothing by these preposterous concessions, because he must allow that the arrangement did

proceed to certain articles of covenant, and the first article on the part of England excludes his Union, being the assent of the Parliament of Great Britain to the requisition of the people of Ireland, which was to be exempted in all times to come from the interference of British Parliaments, and to have established over them no other legislature whatever, save only that of the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland. Admitting, then, the ridiculous idea of ulterior measures to follow final adjustment, a Union could not be one of them. It is hardly necessary to mention that he has been minister ever since that period; that during the whole of that time he never ventured to name Union, as one of those further measures; not in 1783, when a bill was brought in by the ministry; not in 1785, when he introduced his celebrated propositions, and stated the second resolution of the 17th of May, 1782, to comprehend, not the constitution but the commerce of both countries; not in the administration of 1785; not, in short, until he had reduced this country by a train of calamitous measures, to religious divisions, to the condition of a conquest, such as she was when the Parliament of England, at the close of the last century, took away her trade, and in the middle of the present took away her constitution.

The minister proceeds; he impeaches the constitution of 1782; from disavowing an arrangement so adjusted at that time, and an adjustment so concluded, he advances, and calls that adjustment a miserable imperfection; after fifteen years' panegyric, and when he has a great army in Ireland, he has made that discovery, and instead of a constitution which established peace in Ireland, he revives a principle which produced war in America; namely, that two independent legislatures are incompatible. This was the language of Lord North's sword in the colonies; this is the language of Mr. Pitt's sword in Ireland; and this doctrine of imperial legislature which lost Great Britain, America, and which Great Britain surrendered to Ireland, takes once more its bloody station in the speeches of the minister, in defiance of faith, and in contempt of experience. It seems as a British Parliament is disposed to surrender its liberties to the court, the court is disposed to advance its domination over all the British connections; similarity of constitutions is no longer the bond of connection, all are to be swallowed up, according to this doctrine, in one imperial Parliament, whose powers increase as the boundaries of the empire contract, and the spirit of her liberties declines.

"You abolished," says he, "one constitution, but you forgot to form another."* Indeed! What! does he mean that we should have demolished a usurpation, in order to mangle a constitution? Does he mean that we should have overset the tyranny of one Parliament to mangle another? Does he mean that we should have taken away the usurped and tyrannical powers of the legislature of England, in order to restore those usurped and tyrannical powers to that very legislature? In what branches? His propositions have stated them; commerce, &c., the very branches in which they had been, by that very legislature, most oppressively and egregiously, obstinately, and transcendantly abused. Most certainly the conductors of that settlement on the part of Ireland, did not think proper so to restore the grievance of a foreign legislation, and so to limit the powers of a domestic one. The minister has given in his speech the reason. "All the great branches of trade (by which he must mean the linen trade, the plantation trade, and the import trade), are ascribed to the liberality of England, not to covenant." I deny it; but as ministers may deny covenants, it seemed prudent to reserve the powers of Parliament, and accordingly the Irish legislature retains full and ample resources, under the settlement of that time, to incline the councils of England to remember and observe her compacts with our country, should the British minister be disposed to forget them; thus the Parliament of Ireland can so regulate her intercourse with other countries for colonial produce, so regulate her right to an East India trade, and so adjust her channel trade, as to secure a preference in the English market for her linens, and for a direct intercourse with the British plantations. Was Ireland to retain those powers with a view to annoy? No; but she was to retain them, and to retain them, lest Great Britain, instigated by some minister, might be induced to exercise once more those very powers of annoyance with which now the right honourable gentleman threatens Ireland; in short, lest Great Britain should retain all her powers of molestation, and Ireland should surrender all her powers of retaliation. The classic minister must know, Tacitus has told him, that between the powerful and the impotent there can be no peace; the powers I speak of were powers of peace; they were powers of protection; they were the great reserves of the Irish Parliament, to secure the trade of Ireland and harmony of empire; the wisdom of the reserve, such a minister as he is, was born to establish. Strange ideas this minister entertains of the constitution of

* Mr. Pitt's speech.

an Irish Parliament. It should be incompetent, it should be omnipotent; incompetent to regulate the commerce of the country, omnipotent to give away her constitution: it finds its omnipotence in his mind, when it abdicates its trust.

The minister proceeds: he specifies his objections to this settlement of 1782; the case of regency is one, and war another. Facts are against him in both. He states that it was accident alone, meaning the recovery of His Majesty, that preserved the identity of the executive power at the time of the regency; he mis-states that fact totally and entirely; it was not accident, viz. the recovery of the King that preserved the identity of the executive powers; that identity was preserved amply, carefully, and affectionately, by the determination of the Irish Parliament in choosing for their regent the heir apparent of the crown, already designated and determined upon, though not in form invested by the Parliament of Great Britain. The Parliament of Ireland provided in that event not only for the preservation of the monarchical principle, but for the preservation of the connection likewise, and adhered to his country, though they did not link themselves to his party. The principle that came under the consideration of the Irish Parliament was threefold, — the principle of monarchy, the principle of connection, and the principle of party. With regard to the two first, they concurred with the Parliament of England; they chose as regent the next in succession to the crown, and they chose him after, and not before the Parliament of Great Britain had signified, with the minister at their head, their determination to appoint him, and in so doing *they* followed faithfully the spirit of the act of annexation of the crown, which forms between the two countries their bond and connection; but a bond and connection through the medium of monarchy; I am stating the spirit of that act. I say, the act of annexation, and so the bill of 1782, altering and amending the act of Poynings, and ordaining that Irish bills shall be sent to the King, look to the bond and connection of these islands through the medium of monarchy. A British republic never was in the contemplation of either; but an English monarchy, and no other form of government was present to the conceptions of both, either giving thereby the royal house, who are the monarchs of Ireland as well as of Great Britain, a double security, and the throne upon which they sit a double root. I say the Parliament of Ireland did adhere to the principles of British connection, and did unite with them the safe and the prescribed principles of monarchical government. They did concur with the

Parliament of England in the choice of a regent, in the person of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. But with regard to the third principle, namely, the principle of party, they differed; the Parliament of England thinking proper to incumber the regent with extraordinary limitations, and that of Ireland judging it more eligible to leave him in full exercise of all the executive powers; it therefore rejected a motion of delay, knowing the object of that motion was to postpone the appointment until the then Lord-lieutenant of Ireland should have formed a formidable faction confederated against the future government. In short, the Parliament of Ireland did not think it proper to appoint a regent with less than regential power, and to constitute in opposition a minister with great portions of regal authority. Hence, perhaps, this Union; hence, perhaps, the visitation of calamitous government which has befallen Ireland ever since. One of the minister's instruments in this country has confessed it; he has said, in one of his speeches published by his authority, that all the misfortunes of this country sprung from that resentful period. But who is it that reproaches Ireland upon this subject, most injuriously and unjustly, with the crime of availing herself of the opportunity afforded by the most calamitous event that visited the health of our sovereign; it is that very minister who published that opportunity in the broadest and most unqualified resolution; who told the Parliament of both countries, that they were perfectly competent to supply, in that melancholy moment, the deficiency in the executive magistrate, by any method which they thought proper; that is, who told the British Houses they were competent to establish a temporary republic; and told the Irish Houses, of course, and by necessary inference, that they were competent to establish a temporary republic, and to accomplish a temporary separation; to have declined the opportunity is called the ambition of one Parliament; to have proclaimed the opportunity, is called the moderation of the minister. His partizan in this country went further; he maintained the power of the British convention to bind Ireland:—

Ille impiger hausit
Spumantem pateram et pleno proluit se auro.

According to the two opinions, the two Houses of the British Parliament could overturn the British monarchy and Irish constitution.

The minister proceeds: he states a second instance, namely, that of war. Here, again, the fact is against him;

the Parliament of Ireland have, ever since their emancipation, concurred with England on the subject of war; but they have concurred, with this remarkable difference, that, before their emancipation, their concurrence was barren, and since their emancipation, it has been productive. Immediately on the settlement of that emancipation in 1782, they voted a sum for British seamen, and on the apprehension of a war with Spain in 1790, they voted another; and in the present war, under Lord Fitzwilliam's administration, they voted a third; so much more beneficial are the wild offerings of liberty, than the squeezings, and eviscerations, and excruciations of power; but all this is lost upon the minister; fact and bounty make no impression on him; he has against both, a fallacious argument, and hungry speculation.

He thinks that he foresees that the Parliament of Ireland may dissent from that of Great Britain on the subject of war. He knows that peace and war are in the department of the King, not of the Parliament; he knows that, on a proclamation by His Majesty, Ireland is in a state of war, of course, and without the assent of the Houses of Parliament; he knows that the supply of that war depends not on the Parliament of Ireland, but of Great Britain; and therefore the interference of the Parliament of Ireland on that subject is little more than the declaration of a sentiment; now, the declaration of a sentiment on such a subject is only valuable as it is the sentiment of the nation; and the concurrence of Ireland in British wars can only be the sentiment of the nation as the constitution of the nation; that is to say, the rights of Ireland, as claimed by herself, to be exempted from the legislative authority of a British Parliament, are tendered, regarded, and protected by the British empire. It is not the Isle of Ceylon, the Cape of Good Hope, the Mysore country, nor the dominions of Tippoo, nor yet the feathers of her western wing, that engage the attention or interests of Ireland; it is her own freedom and constitution; it is our own idea of that internal freedom and constitution, not such as British ministers, who have invaded that constitution, shall hold forth; nor such as English nor Scotch metaphysicians, who made chains for America, and called them her constitution, and are ready now to cast links for Ireland; but that constitution which she herself, Ireland, feels, comprehends, venerates, and claims; such as she herself expressed in her convention at Dungannon, and through all her counties and cities, and in every description and association of people, and afterwards in full Parliament claimed, carried, registered, and recorded; it is for the preservation of this constitution that

she is interested in British wars. She considers the British empire a great western barrier against invasion from other countries; invasion on what? invasion on her liberties, on her rights and privileges; invasion on self-legislation, the parent and protectress of them all. She hears the ocean protesting against separation, but she hears the sea likewise protesting against Union; she follows, therefore, her physical destination, and obeys the dispensations of providence, when she protests, like that sea, against the two situations, both equally unnatural, separation and union.

On these principles, I suppose the dissent of Ireland, on the subject of war, highly improbable, as it is uninstanced; but I should attribute, like the minister, infallibility to those councils that engage their country in a war, should I suppose the dissent of Ireland on such a subject at all times to be fatal. Happy had it been for His Majesty, happy had it been for his glory and renown in all times to come, had not the Parliament of Ireland, in the American war, cursed him with her concurrence! What could the tutelary angel of England have done more, if that angel had been Minerva, and that Minerva sat in Parliament? What! than to have advanced against the councils of that time, the shield of her displeasure? Looking back to the wars in which Great Britain has been engaged, I should therefore suggest, that she is in less danger from the hesitation of Ireland, than from the precipitation of Great Britain. In this part of his argument, the minister is weak, but in his remedy is not only weak, but mischievous. He proposes, by taking away our powers of dissent, to withdraw our motive of concurrence, and, to secure our silence, forfeits our affection; he foresees an improbable event; of that event he greatly exaggerates the dangers, and provides a remedy which makes that danger not only eminent, but deadly.

I will put this question to my country; I will suppose her at the bar, and I will ask her, will you fight for a Union as you would for a constitution? Will you fight for that Lords and that Commons, who, in the last century, took away your trade, and, in the present, your constitution, as for that King, Lords, and Commons, who have restored both? Well, the minister has destroyed this constitution; to destroy is easy; the edifices of the mind, like the fabrics of marble, require an age to build, but ask only minutes to precipitate; and, as the fall of both is an effort of no time, so neither is it a business of any strength; a pick-axe and a common labourer will do the one, — a little lawyer, a little pimp, a wicked minister, the other.

The constitution, which, with more or less violence, has been the inheritance of this country for 600 years; that *modus tenendi parliamentum*, which lasted and outlasted of Plantagenet the wars; of Tudor the violence; and of Stuart the systematic falsehood; the condition of our connection; yes; the constitution he destroys is one of the pillars of the British empire; he may walk round it and round it, and the more he contemplates, the more must he admire it; such a one as had cost England of money, millions, and of blood, a deluge; cheaply and nobly expended; whose restoration had cost Ireland her noblest efforts, and was the habitation of her loyalty; we are accustomed to behold the kings of these countries in the keeping of Parliament; I say of her loyalty, as well as of her liberty, where she had hung up the sword of the volunteer, her temple of fame, as well as of freedom; where she had seated herself, as she vainly thought, in modest security and in a long repose.

I have done with the pile which the minister batters. I come to the Babel which he builds; and as he throws down without a principle, so does he construct without a foundation. This fabric he calls a Union, and to this, his fabric, there are two striking objections: first, it is no Union; it is not an identification of people, for it excludes the Catholics; 2dly, it is a consolidation of the Irish legislatures; that is to say, a merger of the Irish Parliament, and incurs every objection to a Union, without obtaining the only object which a Union professes: it is an extinction of the constitution, and an exclusion of the people. Well! he has overlooked the people as he has overlooked the sea. I say he excludes the Catholics, and he destroys their best chance of admission — their relative consequence. Thus he reasons, that hereafter, in a course of time, (he does not say when) if they behave themselves, (he does not say how) they may see their subjects submitted to a course of discussion, (he does not say with what result or determination); and as the ground for this inane period, in which he promises nothing, in which he can promise nothing, and in which, if he did promise much, at so remote a period he could perform nothing, unless he, like the evil he has accomplished, be immortal. "For this inane sentence, in which he can scarcely be said to deceive the Catholic, or suffer the Catholic to deceive himself, he exhibits no other ground than the physical inanity of the Catholic body accomplished by a Union, which, as it destroys the relative importance of Ireland, so it destroys the relative proportion of its Catholic inhabitants, and thus they become admissible; because they cease to be any thing. Hence, according to him,

their brilliant expectation: "You were," say his advocates, and so imports his argument, "before the Union as three to one, you will be by the Union as one to four." Thus he founds their hopes of political power on the extinction of physical consequence, and makes the inanity of their body and the non-entity of their country, the pillars of their future ambition.

The Catholics of the city of Dublin have come forth in support of the constitution. I rejoice at it. They have answered their enemies by the best possible answer — by services. Such answer is more than refutation — it is triumph. The man who supports and preserves Parliament, qualifies; the path of glory leads on to privilege; "enjoy with me, if you please; without me, if you be illiberal; but by me certainly; and at all events enjoy the parliamentary constitution of your country." This is to defend the tower, this to leap upon the wreck, this is to sit by the country in her sick bed; if she recover, there is a long and bright order of days before her, and the Catholics will have contributed to that event; if she perish, they will have done their utmost to save her; they will have done as an honest man ought in such an extreme case — they will have flung out their last setting glories, and sunk with their country.

The minister, by his first plans, as detailed by his advocates, not only banished the Catholics from Parliament, but banished the Protestants from it likewise, for he banished them from a due representation therein; he struck off one half of the county representatives, and preserved the proportion of boroughs as two to one; thus he disposed of the questions of Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform, by getting rid of both for ever; thus did he build his first plan of Union upon the abuses both of church and state, and reformed neither; religious monopoly or borough monopoly, he continued to exclude the Catholic from Parliament; and he continued to shut out both Protestant and Catholic from a due and effectual parliamentary representation. He shut out Protestant ascendancy as well as Catholic participation; and, in the place of both, constituted borough ascendancy in perpetual abuse and dominion. He reformed the British Parliament by nearly sixty Irish borough members; he reformed the Irish Parliament by 558 English and Scotch members; and, on this mutual misrepresentation, constituted an imperial legislature. There was no great effort of ability in all this; much felicity of mischief, no expenditure neither of time nor talent. There was nothing in the scheme which was grand, nothing which was deep, nothing which was comprehensive;

he demolished an old institution at the same time that he preserved old abuses, and put himself at their head, and entailed them on posterity, like a common disorder, to be continued through what he calls a parental Parliament. Such a plan was too desperate, as far as relates to the proportion of counties and boroughs. I understand it is in part abandoned, and well it may, because, whether these representatives be in a greater or lesser proportion borough members, they will be the host of administration, and not the representatives of the people. He takes one hundred members, many of whom are removed by the nature of their election from the influence of representation, all of whom, by the removal from their country, are withdrawn from that of sympathy, from that of opinion. He changes the sphere, not only of their action, but of their character and of their sensations. How came the Irish Parliament, with all its borough members in 1779, to demand a free trade — in 1782, to demand a free constitution? Because it sat in Ireland; because they sat in their own country; and because, at that time, they had a country; because, however influenced as many of its members were by places, however uninfluenced as many of its members were by popular representation, yet were they influenced by Irish sympathy. They did not like to meet every hour faces that look shame upon them; they did not like to stand in the sphere of their own infamy; thus they acted as the Irish absentee at the very same time did not act; they saved the country, because they lived in it, as the others abandoned the country because they lived out of it.

I will not say that one hundred Irish gentlemen will act ill, where any man would act well; but never was there a situation in which they had so much temptation to act ill, and so little to act well; great expence and consequent distresses; no support from the voice of an Irish public; no check; they will be in situation a sort of gentlemen of the empire; that is to say, gentlemen at large, absent from one country, and unelected by the other, suspended between both, and belonging to neither. The sagacious English Secretary of State has foretold this: "What advantage (says he) will it be to the talents of Ireland, this opportunity in the British empire thus opened?" That is what we dread. The market of St. Stephen opened to the individual, and the talents of the country, like its property, dragged from the kingdom of Ireland to be sold in London; these men, from their situation (man is the child of situation), their native honour may struggle; but, from their situation, they will be adventurers of the most expensive kind, adventurers with pretensions, dressed and sold, as it were,

in the shrouds and grave-clothes of the Irish Parliament, and playing for hire their tricks on her tomb, the only repository the minister will allow to an Irish constitution, the images of degradation, and the representatives of nothing.

Come, he has done much; he has destroyed one constitution; he has corrupted another; and this corrupted constitution he calls a parental representation. I congratulate the country on the new baptism of what was once called the representative body of the nation. Instead of the plain august language of the constitution, we are here saluted with the novel and barbaric phraseology of empire. With this change of name, we perceive a transfer of obligation, converting the duty of the delegate into the duty of the constituent, and the inheritance of the people into the inheritance of their trustees.

Well, this assembly, this imperial Parliament, what are its elements? Irish absentees, who have forsaken their country, and a British Parliament that took away the constitution. Does he say that such a Parliament will have no prejudices against Ireland? Let him look to his speeches; a capital understanding, a comprehensive knowledge, and a transcendant eloquence; hear him with all these powers speak on the subject of Ireland, whether it be the conduct of her administration, the character of her people, her commerce or her covenants, or her constitution; and he betrays an ignorance that would dishonour an idiot. Does he wish for further instances, let him look to the speeches of his agents in Ireland; speeches made and published for the palate and prejudices of the English court; what description of men have they not traduced, what patriotic achievement have they not depreciated, what honest character have they not belied? Does he look for further instances? let him turn to his catalogue, what notorious apostate whom he has not honoured? What impudent defamer of the rights and character of Ireland that he has not advanced? On the other hand, what man that made a stand for her liberties whom he has not dismissed? Mr. Fitzgerald, Sir John Parnell, who had supported his government long, refused to abandon their country and their honour, and were immediately told they were no longer fit for the service of government. Mr. Foster, who had supported his administration long, held up his shield for that Parliament of which he is the natural advocate, and was immediately honoured by the enmity of the court, and a personal attack on his character and consistency.

Lord Fitzwilliam, an Englishman, a friend to the war, a strenuous advocate for order and regular government, with a character that is purity itself, entertained for Ireland a fatal

affection, and by that one offence cancelled all his long and splendid catalogue of virtues, and was dismissed accordingly.

A legislature, the parent of both countries, he talks of; a legislature, as far as relates to Ireland, free from the influence of vicinity, of sympathy. The Isle of Man is all that (free from the influence of opinion, free from the influence of duty, directed by prejudices, and unincumbered with knowledge). In order to judge what this parental legislature would be, let us consider what the British Parliament has been, and let us compare that Parliament, for this purpose, with the legislature of Ireland; in this comparison I do not mean to approve of all the Parliaments that have sat in Ireland: I left the former Parliament, because I condemned its proceedings; but I argue not like the minister, from the misconduct of one Parliament against the being of Parliament itself. I value that parliamentary constitution by the average of its benefits; and I affirm, that the blessings procured by the Irish Parliament in the last twenty years, are greater than all the blessings afforded by British Parliaments to Ireland for the last century; greater even than the mischiefs inflicted on Ireland by British Parliaments; greater than all the blessings procured by those Parliaments for their own country within that period; within that time the legislatures of England lost an empire, and the legislature of Ireland recovered a constitution.

Well, we have done with this parental Parliament, and now we come to the bribes which he holds out. And, first, he begins with the church. To the Protestant church he promises perpetual security; to the Catholic church his advocates promise eventual salary; and both hold out to the farmer commutation of tithes.

With respect to the Protestant church, whatever may be his wishes in favour of its duration, he takes the strongest measures to accomplish its destruction; for he attempts to disgrace it to all eternity. He is employing, or his agents are employing, several of its members to negotiate away the constitution, and to mendicate addresses transferring to another country the Parliament and legislative power of their own; disfranchising the very people by whom the church is fed, and deserting the holy mission of God to fulfil this profligate mission of the minister. Give up your country, says the minister; give up your character, and be immortal. So said Charles I. to his church, when he prostituted the Gospel, and regimented the clergy into battalion against the constitution, and overturned the church by its own infamy.

At the same time, that the minister endeavours to take away the authority of one church, his advocates tell you, that he

proposes to give salaries to another; that is, they tell you that he proposes to bribe the Catholic clergy, if they will betray the constitution. In whatever form of religion our pious court contemplates the Almighty, it ever occurs to convert him to some diabolical purpose. The Catholics had been accused pretty liberally of disloyalty by those very advocates who now seem to think it is proper to reward their imputed treasons against the King, provided they shall be followed up by real treasons against the people. I do not believe, I never did believe, the general charges made against the Catholics; I do not dispute, I never did dispute the propriety of giving salaries to their clergy; but it should be salaries, not bribes; salaries for the exercise of their religious duty, and not wages for the practice of political apostacy. According to this plan, the Catholic religion, it would seem, disqualified its followers to receive the blessings of the constitution; but his hostilities to that constitution qualifies him to receive a salary for the exercise of that very religion which is at once punished by civil disability, and encouraged by ecclesiastical provision; as good Catholics they are disqualified, and as bad citizens they are to be rewarded.

The minister proceeds: he proposes his third bribe, namely, the abolition of tithes. You observe, such a proposal does not seem to form part of his Union, but is an offer kept back to be regulated, modified, and qualified, when the Union is past, and the consideration is given. I approve of a modus as a compensation for tithe, but I do not approve of it as a compensation for Parliament; when I proposed that measure, and was opposed by men by whom I could only be opposed, and could not be answered, I was told by the King's ministers that commutation of tithe was the overthrow of the church. Couple then the project of the minister now, with the argument of his agents then, and the combined idea amounts to this, that it is prudent to overturn the church, provided at the same time you overturn the constitution; but the fact is, that the argument at that time was false, and the proposal at this time is fallacious; the argument had for its object, personal calumny; and the proposal, national extinction.

The minister has not done with bribes: whatever economy he shows in argument, here he has been generous in the extreme. Parson, Priest, (I think one of his advocates hints the Presbyterians) are not forgotten, and *now* the mercantile body are all to be bribed, that *all may* be ruined. He holds out commercial benefits for political annihilation; he offers you an abundance of capital, but first

he takes it away; he takes away a great portion of the landed capital of the country, by the necessary operation of Union; he will give you, however, commercial capital in its place; but first he will give you taxes; it seems it is only necessary to break the barriers of liberty, and the tides of commerce will flow in of course; take away her rival in landed capital, and then commercial capital advances without fear. Commerce only wants weight; *i. e.* taxes it seems, in order to run with new spirit. He not only finds commerce in the retreat of landed capital, but he finds corn also. His whole speech is a course of surprizes; the growth of excision, the resource of incumbrance, and harvests sown and gathered by the absence of the proprietor of the soil and of their property. All these things are to come; when? He does not tell you; where? He does not tell you; you take his word for all this. I have heard of a banker's bill of exchange, Bank of England's notes, Bank of Ireland's notes, but a prophet's promissory note is a new traffic; all he gets from Ireland is our solid loss; all he promises are visionary, distant, and prophetic advantages. He sees, I do not, British merchants and British capital sailing to the provinces of Connaught and Munster; there they settle great multitudes, themselves, and families. He mentions not what description of manufactures; who from Birmingham, who from Manchester; no matter; he cares not; he goes on asserting, and asserting with great ease to himself, and without any obligation to fact. Imagination is the region in which he delights to disport, where he is to take away your Parliament, where he is to take away your final judicature, where he is to take away your money, where he is to increase your taxes, where he is to get an Irish tribute; there he is a plain direct matter-of-fact man; but where is he to pay you for all this, there he is poetic and prophetic; no longer a financier, but an inspired accountant. Fancy gives him her wand, Amalthea takes him by the hand; Ceres is in her train.

The English capitalist, he thinks, will settle his family in the midst of those Irish Catholics, whom he does not think it safe to admit into Parliament; as subjects, he thinks them dangerous; as a neighbouring multitude, safe. The English manufacturer will make this distinction; he will dread them as individuals, and confide in them as a body, and settle his family and his property in the midst of them; he will therefore, the minister supposes, leave his coal mines, leave his machinery, leave his comforts, leave his habits, conquer his prejudices, and come over to Ireland to meet his taxes, and miss his constitution. They did not do this when the taxes

of Ireland were few; we were indeed told they would, as we are now told. They did not do this when there was no military government in Ireland. However, as prejudices against the country increase, he supposes commercial confidence may increase likewise. There is no contradicting all this, because arguments which reason does not suggest, reason cannot remove; besides, the minister, in all this, does not argue, but foretel. Now you can scarcely answer a prophet; you can only disbelieve him; his arguments are false, but his inspiration may be true; appearances, however, are against them; for instance, a principal ground of complaint in Ireland is a misapplication of landed capital, or the diversion of it to other countries from the cultivation of Ireland, where great tracts remain either totally neglected, or superficially improved; where the tenantry have not capital, and the land can be reclaimed only by the employment (and a very rational employment it would be) of part of the rent arising therefrom, on the soil which produced it, improving however gradually since the establishment of our free constitution, which contains in itself the powers of checking the evil I speak of, and which, by adding to the consequence of the country, will naturally diminish the number of absentees, comparatively aided as it must be by the growth of English taxes, unless by a Union we adopt those taxes in Ireland. How does he remedy this disorder? He finds a great absentee draught; he gives you another; and having secured to you two complaints, he engages to cure both. Another principal cause of complaint, is another effect arising from the non-residence of Irish landlords, whose presence on their own estates is necessary for the succour, as well as the improvement of their tenantry; that the peasant may not perish for want of medicine, of cordial, and of cure, which they can only find in the administration of the landlord, who civilizes them, and regulates them in the capacity of a magistrate, while he husbands and covers them in that of a protector, improving not only them but himself by the exercise of his virtues, as well as the dispensation of his property, drawing together the two orders of society, the rich and poor, until each may administer to the other, and civilize, the one by giving, and the other by receiving; so that aristocracy and democracy may have a head and a body; so that the rich may bring on the poor, and the poor may strengthen the rich; and both contributing to the strength, order, and beauty of the state, may form that pillar of society, where all below is strength, and all above is grace. How does his plan accomplish this? He withdraws their landed gentlemen, and then improves Irish manners by

English factors; but I leave his trifling, and come to his threats.

As he offered before a trade which he had not to give, so now he menaces to withdraw a trade which he cannot take away; his threat is founded on a monstrous assertion, that our principal branches of commerce are due to the liberality of England.

Liberality of England to Irish commerce! Where are we to look for it? In what part of this century? For near one hundred years, (it is a long time,) the minister himself disclaims the illiberal policy of his country. Is it at the close of this century; for instance, in His Majesty's speech from the throne in the year 1775, where he is advised to signify his intention to maintain the principle of American taxation over all his dominions? Or is it in the embargo of the same period? Or is it in the tea tax imposed on Ireland by the British Parliament about the period of 1779? Or will he say this liberality appears in the mockery of those bills, in which England affected to relieve the distresses of Ireland? Was it in the English act, giving the Irish a power to catch whales, or in that other bill, permitting the Irish to plant tobacco? Or was it in 1778, that this liberality made its appearance? No: For I remember, in that period, supporting an address for the extension of Irish commerce; and I remember also being opposed and defeated, by the immediate interposition of the Crown. It is not then in the period of 1778, that we are to look for this liberality? Was it in the period of 1779, the time of the short money bill, of the non-consumption agreement, and of the Irish requisition of free trade?

Here is the liberality of England; she was just then, she was liberal never; and she was just to you then, because you were then just to yourself; she has been faithful since; I shall be satisfied for one with her fidelity and justice, and on these occasions I acknowledge both. Are there any further instances in which we are to look for English justice in the subject of Irish trade? Yes; there is another, in 1793, on the subject of the re-export; an attempt had been made to carry that point for Ireland in 1786, contained in two resolutions which I moved as an amendment to the navigation act, which has been charged to Ireland as a favour, but which was in fact jobbed to the British ministry by him who made the charge, and sold without any clause of equality and reciprocality. But afterwards in 1793, a re-export bill passed in Great Britain in favour of Ireland, exactly at the time when the charter of the East India Company expired, and an Irish bill was necessary and did pass to secure her monopoly for a limited time: such is the history of British concession. Now look

at the tariff, or see what has been the result; greatly in favour of England. Under the head of home manufacture and colonial produce, in favour of England; under the head of raw material the produce of their respective countries, above two millions in favour of England. Under the head of foreign articles, a great balance in favour of England. Add to this an absentee rental of considerably above a million, and you will find there is a balance of a sum of above four millions annually, in which Ireland administers to Great Britain, and pours herself, as it were, abundantly, and without reserve into the British dominion.

This is the trade the minister threatens to alter, and thinks he threatens not Great Britain but Ireland. Here he will have some difficulty; and, first, the covenant of 1779; he denies that covenant; he says, that all the great commercial advantages of Ireland are to be ascribed to the liberality of the British Parliament, and not to the Irish Parliament. Wherever he meets an Irish covenant he gives it no quarter. I will state the fact, and let the public judge. In October 1779, an address passed the Irish Commons, containing a requisition for a free trade; it was followed by a motion declaring that the Irish Commons would not, for the present, grant new taxes; it was followed by a limitation of the act of supply to the duration of six months only. It was considered in England, and attended with resolutions moved by the then minister, purporting to repeal certain restrictive acts on the free trade of Ireland, and to grant a direct intercourse between Ireland and His Majesty's plantations, subject to equality of duty. These resolutions were considered in the Parliament of Ireland *; they were voted satisfactory. A long money bill was then passed, and new taxes were then granted in consideration thereof, and this he calls no covenant. He has denied, it seems, the linen covenant; he has denied this commercial covenant of 1779; and he has denied the constitutional covenant of 1782; and having disclaimed the obligation of three treaties, he now proposes a fourth, in which he desires you to give up your Parliament to secure his faith in time to come. I argue in a different manner; I argue from his disposition to dispute the validity of covenant to the necessity of the existence of Parliament — an Irish Parliament — the guarantee of those covenants, who has power to preserve the obligation, or resources to retaliate. Does the minister, when he talks of an eleemosynary trade,

* See the resolutions and the law expressing the condition and covenant.

recollect how the Irish Parliament could affect the East India Company, by discontinuing the act of 1793, granted but for a limited time? Does he recollect how she could affect the British West India monopoly, by withdrawing her exclusive consumption from the British plantations? Does he recollect how we could affect the navy of England, by regulations regarding our Irish provisions? Does he recollect how we could affect her empire, by forming commercial intercourse with the rest of the world? But let not this depend upon idle threats, threats which never should have been advanced on one side, if they had not been first most imprudently introduced on his. I say, let not the argument rest on threats, but let it rest on the past experiment; the experiment has been made; we got our trade by our resources and our Parliament; we will keep our trade by affection and by covenant. But should a British minister choose to despise those tenures, we have another; we can keep our trade by the means by which we have obtained it, — our Parliament, our resources.

He speaks of the linen trade. On this subject, indeed, he has been answered, as he has upon the others, by the argument and by the experiment; the argument which proves that the bounty on linen was not granted for the sake of Ireland, and that Irish linen sells itself. But suppose his reasoning in this case to be as true as it is fallacious, what does it amount to? That his country robbed Ireland of her free trade in the last century, and gave her, in the place of it, the export of one solitary manufacture, depending on the charity of England; and now he proposes to rob Ireland of that manufacture, unless Ireland consents to be robbed of her Parliament! He has no other ground of triumph but the disgrace and dishonour of his country; however, her case is better than he has stated it; and that is proved by the experiment; for in 1779, we were encountered by the same threats on the same subject: we despised those threats; we put the question to a trial; we entered into a non-consumption agreement; we demanded a free trade; the free trade we obtained; the linen trade we preserved.

What he cannot reconcile to your interest, he affects to reconcile to your honour. He, the minister, "his budget with corruption crammed," proposes to you to give up the ancient inheritance of your country; to proclaim an utter and blank incapacity, and to register this proclamation of incapacity in an act which inflicts on this ancient nation an eternal disability; and he accompanies these monstrous proposals by undisguised terror, and unqualified bribery, and this he calls no attack on the honour and dignity of the kingdom.

The thing he proposes to buy, is what cannot be sold —

LIBERTY! For it, he has nothing to give: every thing of value which you possess, you obtained under a free constitution; part with it, and you must be not only a slave but an idiot.

His propositions not only go to your dishonour, but they are built upon nothing else: he tells you, it is his main argument, that you are unfit to exercise a free constitution; and he affects to prove it by the experiment: Jacobinism grows, says he, out of the very state and condition of Ireland. I have heard of Parliament impeaching ministers; but here is a minister impeaching Parliament; he does more — he impeaches the parliamentary constitution itself: the abuses in that constitution he has protected; it is only its being that he destroys; on what ground? Your exports since your emancipation, and under that parliamentary constitution, and in a great measure by that parliamentary constitution, have nearly doubled; commercially it has worked well. Your concord with England since the emancipation, as far as it relates to Parliament on the subject of war, has been not only approved, but has been productive; imperially, therefore, it has worked well. What then does the minister in fact object to? That you have supported him; that you have concurred in his system; therefore he proposes to the people to abolish the Parliament, and to continue the minister. He does more — he proposes to you to substitute the British Parliament in your place, to destroy the body that restored your liberties, and restore that body which destroyed them. Against such a proposition, were I expiring on the floor, I should beg to utter my last breath, and record my dying testimony.

Mr. Corry replied to Mr. Grattan, and opposed the amendment. At ten o'clock in the morning, the House divided. Ayes for the amendment 96. Tellers for the Ayes, Sir Laurence Parsons and Mr. F. Savage. Noes 138. Tellers for the Noes, Viscount Loftus and Mr. Denis Browne. Majority against Sir Laurence Parson's amendment 42.

The following is a List of the *Minority* against the Union.

Acheson, Hon. A.
Alcock, William C.
Armstrong, William H.
Babbington, David
Ball, John
Barrington, Jonah
Barry, Colonel John Maxwell
Beresford, J. C.
Blakeney, William
Brooke, H. V.
Burton, William
Bushe, Charles
Butler, Hon. James
Carew, R. S.
Clements, Lord
Cole, Lord
Cooper, Joseph Edward
Corry, Lord Viscount
Dalway, Noah
Daly, D. B.
Dawson, Richard
Dawson, Arthur

Dobbs, Francis
Egan, John
Evans, George
Falkiner, Frederick John
Fitzgerald, Right Hon. James
Fortescue, William Charles
Foster, Hon. Thomas
Freke, Sir John, Bart.
French, Arthur
Gorges, Hamilton
Grattan, Henry
Hamilton, Hans
Hamilton, Hon. A. C.
Hardman, Edward
Hardy, Francis
Hoare, Sir Joseph
Hoare, Edward
Hume, William Hoare
Irwin, H.
King, Gilbert
King, John
Lambert, Gustavus
Latouche, John
Latouche, John, jun.
Latouche, Robert
Lee, Edward
Leslie, Charles Powell
Lighton, Sir Thomas
Macartney, Sir John
Matthew, Lord
Maxwell, Lord
Metge, John
Moore, Arthur
Moore, Stephen, (Clonmell)
Moore, John
Montgomery, Alexander
O'Brien, Sir Edward
O'Hara, Charles
O'Callaghan, Hon. W.
O'Donnell, James M.
Ogle, Right Hon. G.
Parnell, Sir John
Parnell, Henry
Parsons, Sir Laurence, *T.*
Plunket, William C.
Ponsonby, Right Hon. W. Brab.
Ponsonby, J. B.
Ponsonby, Major William
Ponsonby, George
Power, Richard
Preston, Joseph
Reilly, John
Richardson, Sir William
Rochfort, Gustavus
Rochfort, John St.
Rowley, Clotworthy
Rowley, William
Rowley, J.
Ruxton, Charles
Ruxton, William P.
Saunderson, Francis
Savage, Francis, *T.*
Skeffington, Hon. W. J.
Smyth, William, (Westmeath)
Stewart, James
Synge, Francis
Taylor, John
Tighe, William
Tighe, Henry
Townshend, Thomas
Vereker, Charles
Waller, John
Westby, Nic.
Wilson, E. D.
Wolfe, John
Wynne, Owen

The following is a List of the Majority in Favour of the Union.

Alexander, H.
Aldridge, R.
Archdall, R.
Bagwell, John
Bagwell, John, jun.
Bagwell, William
Bailey, William
Beresford, Right Hon. J.
Beresford, J. jun.
Beresford, Colonel M.
Bingham, J.
Blake, Joseph Henry
Blackwood, Sir J. S.
Blaquiere, Sir J.
Botet, Anthony
Boyle, Lord
Brown, Right Hon. D. *T.*
Browne, Arthur
Bruce, Stewart
Bunbury, G.
Burton, Hon. Colonel
Burdett, George
Butler, Sir Richard
Castlereagh, Lord
Cavendish, G.
Cavendish, Sir H.
Cane, James
Casey, Thomas
Chinnery, Sir Broderick
Cooke, E.
Coote, C. H.
Cope, Colonel R. C.
Corry, Right Hon. Isaac
Cotter, Sir J.

Cotter, R.
Cradock, General
Crosbie, James
Crosbie, W. A.
Creighton, Hon. A.
Creighton, Hon. J.
Daly, St. G.
Elliot, William
Eustace, General
Ferguson, A.
Fitzgerald, Lord Charles
Forward, Right Hon. William
Fortescue, Sir C.
Fortescue, William
Fox, Luke
Galbraith, J.
Grady, H. D.
Hancock, William
Hare, Richard
Hare, William
Hatton, G.
Hobson, John
Howard, Hugh
Henniker, Colonel B.
Holmes, Peter
Hutchinson, Hon. M. G.
Jackson, Colonel G.
Jackson, Major-general
Jephson, Den.
Jocelyn, Hon. J.
Johnson, William
Jones, W.
Jones, Theophilus
Keane, John
Kearney, James
Keatinge, Colonel
Kemmis, Henry
Knott, William
Knox, James
Knox, Andrew
Lake, General
Langrishe, Right Hon. Sir H.
Latouche, Right Hon. David
Lindsay, Thomas, sen.
Lindsay, Thomas, jun.
Loftus, Lord, T.
Loftus, General
Longfield, John
Longfield, Captain J.
Magennis, Richard
Mahon, Colonel Thomas
Mahon, Ross
Martin, Richard
Mason, Right Hon. J. M.
Massey, H. D.
M'Namara, Francis
M'Naughten, E. A
M'Cleland, James
M'Donnell, Colonel Charles
Moore, S.
Moore, N. M.
Morris, Right Hon. Lodge
Musgrave, Sir R.
Nesbit, Thomas
Newcomen, Sir William
Neville, Richard
Odell, William
Osborne, Charles
Ormsby, J. M.
Pakenham, T.
Pakenham, Colonel Edward
Pennefather, R.
Prendergast, T.
Prittie, H. S.
Quin, Sir Richard
Roche, Sir Boyle
Rowley, Hon. C.
Rutledge, R.
Sandford, H. M.
Savage, J.
Sharkey, R.
Skeffington, Hon. H.
Smith, W.
Stanley, Edmund
Staples, John
Stewart, John
Stratton, John
Stratford, Hon. B.
Stratford, Hon. J.
Stannus, Thomas
Talbot, William
Toler, Right Hon. J.
Tottenham, Charles
Tottenham, P.
Trench, Frederick
Trench, Hon. Richard
Trench, Hon. Charles
Tyrone, Earl of
Verner, James
Walsh, P.
Ward, Hon. R.
Wemys, Colonel
Westenra, Henry
Whaley, Thomas
Woodward Benjamin B.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORD-LIEUTENANT (CORNWALLIS), RECOMMENDING A UNION.

LORD CASTLEREAGH PROPOSES HIS RESOLUTIONS IN FAVOUR OF A UNION BETWEEN IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN.

February 5. 1800.

SEVERAL members were sworn in and took their seats. Petitions against the Union were presented from the counties of Dublin, Limerick, Wexford, Cavan, Longford, Tipperary, Galway, Monaghan, Fermanagh, Kilkenny, Meath; also, from the town of Belfast, and the cities of Limerick and Dublin. These petitions deprecated the question of Union, and prayed that the House would preserve the constitution inviolate, according to the final settlement of 1782.

Sir Laurence Parsons rose to call the attention of the House to a subject of great moment. The county which he had the honour to represent, had sent a requisition to the High Sheriff (Mr. Darby) to convene a county meeting, to take into consideration the measure of a legislative Union; the sheriff declined to comply with the requisition. In consequence of which, a number of the magistrates of the county signed a notice, requiring a meeting of the inhabitants to be held at Birr.

Major Rogers who commanded the garrison, told one of the magistrates, that, if the freeholders attempted to meet, he would disperse them by military power. The magistrate stated the right of the people to assemble, and advised him to apply to government, before he attempted to act in such a manner. The freeholders assembled, and proceeded to deliberate on the measure of the Union; the high sheriff, who had declined to convene the meeting, came to the court-house, and told them, if they did not disperse, the military would disperse them; the meeting continued to sit, when information was sent to them that the garrison had been turned out, and was marching towards the court-house; the meeting had just time to come to their resolution, and leave the court-house; and, as they went out, they met the army advancing against them with four pieces of cannon, with lighted matches, and with Major Rogers at their head. Being expostulated with for bringing the army, and advancing with cannon against the people, he replied, that, if he had got but one word from the sheriff, he would have knocked the court-house about their ears.

Sir Laurence had no doubt, that the government had been informed of what would happen before the measure first complained of had taken place. He stated, there was no appearance of tumult in the town; that the government had been to blame; that if the Parliament over looked such proceedings, liberty was at an end. The House of Commons would soon be surrounded by a military force; that the Government would resort to every measure to procure support for the Union; and, after reprobating the conduct of ministers, he concluded by moving the following resolutions.

1st. "That to prevent, by military force, the freeholders of any county from meeting to petition Parliament, is a gross violation of the privileges of this House, and a subversion of the constitution."

2nd. "That Verney Darby, Esq. High-Sheriff of the King's County, and Major Rogers, commanding the troops at Birr, do attend this House on Wednesday next."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bowes Daly, and supported by Mr. Dawson, Mr. Egan, Mr. John Claudius Beresford, Sir John Parnell, and Colonel Vereker. The latter stated the interference of the military in the Town of Limerick, the soldiers having on a particular occasion prevented the inhabitants from illuminating their houses.

The first resolution was opposed by Mr. Alexander, Mr. Ogle, Mr. Trench, Mr. Casey, the Attorney-general (Toler), and Lord Castlereagh. The latter denied that he had ever heard of the matter in his official capacity; he considered the first resolution as a trick to impose upon the people; he stated he would enquire into the facts.

Sir Laurence replied: again asserting he believed government had been apprised that the transaction was to take place. He withdrew the first resolution, and the second was unanimously carried.*

Lord Castlereagh then rose and said, he had it in command to deliver the following message from His Majesty to the House. He then read the address as follows:

"Cornwallis,

"At the close of the last session, in obedience to the particular commands which I received from His Majesty, I acquainted this Parliament that a joint address of the two Houses of Parliament of Great Britain had been laid before His Majesty, accompanied by resolutions, proposing and recommending a complete and entire Union between Great Britain and Ireland; to be established by the mutual consent of both Parliaments, founded on equal and liberal principles, on the similarity of laws, constitution, and government, and on a sense of mutual interests and affections.

"I have it now further in command from His Majesty to lay those resolutions before this House, and solemnly to recommend

* The result of the motion was, that an examination took place at the Bar. It appeared that the High Sheriff had refused to call a meeting of the county; that he had refused to let the freeholders meet in their own Court House; that he had dispersed their meeting; that the magistrates having remonstrated with Major Rogers on his conduct, he replied, "*This is what you must always expect when things do not go square;*" and, that he only waited for the orders of the Sheriff to blow the Court House about the ears of the freeholders." His simple excuse was that *he had* marched out to protect his military stores.—The House of Commons, however, resolved that the conduct of the individuals in question had for its object the preservation of the peace; that it was loyal, expedient, and meritorious; that it was not intended to impede the right to petition; and was highly deserving the approbation of the House

to the consideration of his faithful Commons the great objects they embrace.

"His Majesty has observed, with increasing satisfaction, that the sentiments which have continued to be manifested in favour of this important and salutary measure, by such numerous and respectable descriptions of his Irish subjects, confirm the hope he has expressed, that its accomplishment will prove to be as much the joint wish, as it unquestionably is the common interest, of both his kingdoms; an event to which His Majesty looks forward with the utmost earnestness, as the only means by which the common interests of all his people can be indissolubly united, and their security and happiness can be permanently established.

"His Majesty therefore relies on the wisdom of his Parliament and the loyal concurrence of his people for the completion of this great work, with a firm persuasion that a full and unreserved participation of constitutional and commercial advantages, will augment and perpetuate the prosperity of his subjects, of his United Kingdom; and that, under the favour of Divine Providence, the freedom and power of the British empire will be established on a foundation not to be shaken by the efforts, either of its foreign or domestic enemies." "C."

Lord Castlereagh then rose: He said it was his duty to put the House in possession of the views of the British and Irish governments. Government had not introduced the measure of Union until it had been justified by the sentiment of the people. The commercial towns were favourable to the measure; the alarm which the opposition strove to excite and which some people felt, was idle and visionary; such had been the case in Scotland; petitions against the measure of the Union with that country, had been presented in great numbers, but the real interests of the country in the end prevailed; he instanced the case of the regency in 1789, to show the dangers of a distinct legislature; that on all the questions of war and peace, to avoid separation, Ireland was bound, without deliberation, to adopt the conduct of Great Britain. He stated that the immediate effect of the Union would be that Ireland would be considerably less taxed than if she remained separate. He stated the exports and imports for the last three years, the value of Irish commerce at 10,900,000*l.*; that of England, at 73,900,000*l*; he therefore took the proportion as seven to one. He took the value of the following articles, viz. malt, beer, spirits, wine, tea, tobacco, sugar consumed in the respective countries; the value of the British articles amounted to 46,891,655*l.*; that of the Irish articles to 5,954,856*l.*; forming a proportion of seven seven-eights to one; he therefore proposed that the contribution to the common expences of the empire should be in the proportion of fifteen for Great Britain and two for Ireland, to continue for twenty years. He entered into a calculation to show that there would be a saving to Ireland in the actual war expence, on an estimate of the last year of nearly one million sterling; and on the peace establishment a saving of 450,000*l.*; that there was a deficiency in the revenue of 600,000*l.*

to make up the expence of the peace establishment, but that this would be remedied by the Union, which, he contended, would give half a million in aid of the peace, and one million in aid of the war establishment. Having stated the financial, he went to the commercial part of the system, the principle of which he stated could only be that of perfect freedom of export between the two countries; he contended that the linen manufacture would receive as much advantage from the care of a British as an Irish Parliament. With respect to foreign produce passing from one country into the other, it should be admitted into either country, as if imported directly from the place of its growth or manufacture. This he considered as a great advantage to Ireland, inasmuch as her position was so much better adapted for the admission of goods than Great Britain. The cities of Dublin and Cork would be great gainers by such regulations.

As to the church establishment, there would be no possibility of giving it security in any other way than by a complete incorporation with that of Great Britain; while the present system continued, one minister might wish to uphold the present establishment, another the system of exclusion, and a third might be desirous to open the establishment to every claimant; under such a policy, the country would never be quiet. But the establishments being incorporated, and the cause of discontent removed, "the Protestant would feel himself supported, and the claims of the Catholic might then be temperately heard and calmly discussed before an impartial tribunal (an imperial Parliament) that would decide on the question, divested of those local circumstances, which served to irritate and inflame. The question would be then put on the broad principles of imperial policy, and, freed from prejudices, would be deliberately and calmly weighed." He denied that the Catholic clergy had been seduced to support the measure of Union; a provision for them and the dissenting clergy had been in contemplation long before the question of Union. He took the future representation, on an estimate of the population of the two countries and the relative properties; that of Ireland four millions, that of Great Britain ten millions; and he proposed thirty-two peers, (twenty-eight temporal, to be chosen for life; and four bishops, to sit in rotation;) and for the Commons one hundred members, (sixty-four to be returned for counties, and thirty-six for cities and boroughs.) The disfranchisement of such a number of boroughs, would render it necessary to adopt a measure of compensation to those individuals who would be injured by that arrangement. He trusted the question of parliamentary reform would be set at rest for ever. He concluded by proposing the resolutions, and moving that the House should, on the Wednesday following, go into a committee to take the message and resolutions into consideration.

The motion was opposed by Mr. George Ponsonby, Sir John Parnell, Mr. Dawson, Mr. Dobbs, Colonel Vereker, Mr. Lee, Mr. J. C. Beresford, Mr. William Tighe, Mr. O'Donnell, Mr. Peter Burrowes, Mr. Ogle, and Mr. Saurin.

The motion was supported by Mr. Martin, Sir John Blaquiere, Mr. Ormsby (afterwards Counsel to the Commissioners of Revenue), Mr. Smith (afterwards Judge), Sergeant Stanley. Mr. Duigenan, Mr. M'Clelland (afterwards Judge), and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Corry).

The members who opposed the Union, protested against the means resorted to by government for procuring addresses, in order to give it an apparent support when it was well known that the sense of the country was against the measure. They had an instance that night of the interference of the military, to repress the expression of public opinion, when that opinion appeared to be favourable to the constitution; the proceedings on the part of government were the most notorious and flagrant ever known; it was new in the practice of this country, that the Lord-lieutenant should make a tour of the kingdom in order to canvass for a political question; government had moved for thirty-five new writs for members to vote away the constitution of the country. Some members who opposed the Union, were, by the influence of government, induced to absent themselves; one member (a colonel in the army, Colonel Cole) was ordered to join his regiment, and was not suffered to vacate his seat, because he would not undertake that his successor should support the Union. In arguing the constitutional part of the question, they denied the competency of the Parliament to pass the measure. The representatives of the people were but trustees, they were appointed to discharge the duties reposed in them, but without any power to put an end to their existence, that if there were any benefits in store such as had been mentioned by the minister, they could be conferred upon Ireland without a Union; but that those alleged benefits were only fallacious promises held out to deceive the people into a surrender of their liberties; that the present moment was an unfair one for the government to avail itself of, as Ireland had not yet recovered from the effects of the late insurrection; that the troops of another country were still in the kingdom; that martial law was still in existence; the Habeas Corpus act was still suspended; the rebellion act, a measure that swept away every vestige of freedom, was still in existence; and the nation was thus deprived of a great portion of its liberties. That the compensation mentioned by the noble lord (Castlereagh) to be given for the boroughs, was nothing but a bribe to the members and a new mode of packing the Parliament.

Those who argued in favour of the Union, set forth the advantages which they said were likely to result from the proposed measure; that the commerce and the trade of the country would be increased; that the strength of the empire would be secured, and all danger from any internal disturbance or insurrection would in future be removed; that it was not subjection to Great Britain, but incorporation.

Mr. GRATTAN said: Sir, the right honourable member proposes a counter revolution, as if he were to bring in a bill

to depose the house of Hanover, and re-establish that of Stuart. He proposes to restore the domination of the British Parliament that abdicated Ireland, and to depose the Irish Parliament who saved her. He grounds his proposition on the opportunity, and the weakness, and the divisions, and the martial law of the country. He conceals that ground, because, in disclosing it, he would display the real character and perfidy of the measure; and he professes to introduce it on another ground, namely the wishes of the country as misstated and misrepresented by the servants of the Crown. He has to encounter, or rather the minister of England has encounter, in this proposition, gigantic difficulties; for instance, the defence of the Parliament of Great Britain towards Ireland for one hundred years; he has to explain away the tyrannical acts of a century; he has to explain away the English act against importing live cattle from Ireland; the act prohibiting the exportation of wool from Ireland; the glass act; the plantation act; the usurpation of the final judicature; and the usurpation and exercise of legislative authority; a conduct so lawless, that even though mild, it had been a tyranny; a conduct so oppressive, that even though legal, it had been an abdication. So said Mr. Fox upon the subject of the repeal: "I could wish to retain the powers of external legislature, but they have been so grossly abused by Great Britain, that they, with the rest, must be abandoned." So said the Irish Parliament in its emphatic paragraph, nothing but a free trade can save us from impending ruin — what ruin? Ruin brought on by the British Parliament. So said Mr. Grenville, in 1785 — a barbarous and absurd policy, by which she has been debarred from the advantages that God and nature gave her. So says the present minister now — a system unworthy of the liberality of England, and injurious to the interest of Ireland. So said he, in his other speech in 1785 — a system, says he, speaking of the system of that Parliament which he now proposes to restore, which counteracted the kindness of Providence, and suspended the industry of man, put Ireland under such restraints that she was shut out of every species of commerce, restrained her from sending the produce of her own soil to foreign markets, and all correspondence with the colonies of Britain was prohibited to her, so that she could not derive their commodities but through the medium of Britain. This was the system that prevailed, and this was the state of thraldom in which that country had been kept, ever since the Revolution.

Behold the character which the minister himself gives of that very legislature, which he now proposes to re-establish;

it remains for him to prove that the character of the Irish subject is altered. He is to prove that the Parliament of Great Britain is more pure, more mild, less influenced at present, than in the former century. He is to combat the authority of his father, who declared the Parliament required a new portion of blood, to enable her to bear her infirmities; he has to combat his own motion for parliamentary reform; he has to combat her own declarations of 1782, declaring that the influence of the Crown was increasing, had increased, and ought to be diminished; he has to combat the increase of that influence, since that resolution; he has to combat the paragraph in His Majesty's speech of 1775, at the opening of the American war, and the echo of that paragraph by the British Parliament, declaring the determination to maintain the principle and power of British taxation throughout all His Majesty's dominions; he has to contend against the conduct of the British Parliament, through the whole of the American war; he has to contend against her conduct to Ireland in that war, the tea tax of 1779. In the American war she taxed you; notwithstanding your grant of 300,000*l.*; of 1778, she taxed you; she imposed on you at that time a tax on tea, at your own ports; and transmitted the act to the Irish commissioners, to collect the tax; he has to combat the debt of above 400,000,000*l.* the growth of the century, and the growing exigencies of Great Britain, in consequence of that debt. He has to prove a reform in her sentiments, without any reform in her condition; he has to prove, in short, that as the difficulties of Great Britain, and, as far as relates to the people of Ireland, as her jealousies increase, so will increase her confidence in that people, and the mildness of her legislature. He must endeavour to establish as a prophet, what he has disclaimed and denied as an evidence. He must disprove two consequences which immediately threaten from the odium of the Union, and the increased expences of the empire; namely, a military government in Ireland for the present; and, for the future, at no very distant period, an augmentation of taxes; consequences which go directly against your trade, and your liberties.

From all this I conclude, that the British Parliament however wise, provident, beneficial, and respectable in regulating her own country and the dominions thereunto belonging, continues for Ireland an experiment wholly, utterly, totally, and most absolutely inadmissible.

The minister has another difficulty to encounter, viz. the impeachment of the Parliament of Ireland to deny the

exercise of the general export of the country, of nearly the double since 1782; of the linen, nearly two-thirds since the same period; the increase of her corn trade, since that period, including the ceasing of her import; 1,000,000 of her population (nearly one-fourth) of the growth of all this since her constitution. Under her constitution, corn for instance under the operation of parliamentary bounty, linen under the operation of parliamentary regulation, the plantation trade, the gift of the efforts of the Irish Parliament, and her whole growth of commerce, the apparent result of that spirit of free trade which her Parliament gave and inspired. On a comparison, therefore, of the decline of the country, under the love of the Parliament of Great Britain, and of the growth of the country under the maternal wing of her own Parliament, the minister gains but little. On a comparison of the progress of Scotland under a Union, and of Ireland under a separate Parliament, he will not gain more; he will find that our population increased in sixteen years more than that of Scotland in one hundred; he will find that our staple trade has increased under a separate Parliament four times as much as that of Scotland under the Union; he will find, on the whole, that the parliamentary constitution of Ireland, in reference to the commerce of this country has answered completely, and has rendered his offers on that subject as necessary as they are improbable. How has it answered in reference to empire? Here he has more difficulties to encounter; the imperial subjects he has specified, navigation, war, and treaty; the parliamentary constitution of Ireland has fulfilled them all.

Two treaties came before her; the American treaty and the French treaty. She ratified both; she passed the manifest act and the navigation act; she granted a supply in the last French war; she voted a supply upon the rumour of a Spanish war, and she voted another in the present French war. It follows, that the parliamentary constitution of Ireland has been adequate to the purposes of empire as well as of commerce. There again he has to oppose him, the fact and the history: and here again he has to oppose him, his own repeated declarations. For as he has been an evidence against the English Parliament in the capacity of a legislator for Ireland, he has been no less a strong, direct, repeated, and positive testimony in favour of the Parliament of Ireland. (See the King's speech in 1796 — "I shall endeavour to secure the happiness and prosperity of this kingdom, and to protect and maintain its most excellent constitution.")—(See his speech in 1795 — "Attached to that sovereign, and the

constitution it is his glory to preserve; the great staple manufacture of your country has increased beyond your most sanguine hope, chiefly owing to your own Parliament; its constant superintendance, and its wise provisions; and, *next to that*, to the *merited* and liberal encouragement in the British market.")—(See his speech in 1794 — "You are now involved in a contest for your constitution, and for the preservation of every principle which upholds social order.") I might add, and rank with the authority of kings, and far above that of the ministers — your own address declaring the growth of your country under the Irish Parliament, as you had in 1779 declared the ruin of your country under the Parliament of England. You say the kingdom of Ireland has arisen to a height of prosperity unhoped for, and unparalleled. Fact and authority come in crowds against him.

But the minister alleges that Jacobinism grows out of our situation; and that situation he explains to be our separate Parliament; and he thinks that enough. An ancient constitution and a recorded covenant are to be put down by that sentence. It is no longer a question, you see, according to him, of right, or of treaty, but of convenience: expediency is to be the measure of both; and yet he will not say to England, Jacobinism grows out of a popular constitution, therefore strike out the people; his idea is a paradox; viz. that the spirit of democracy, which he means by Jacobinism, grows from the king, or the chamber of the Lords, or from the chamber of the Commons, in which aristocracy has no small share of power. In fact, his assertion is, that democracy grows out of monarchy and aristocracy, with certain popular mixture; that is, the excess grows out of the temperament; his instances are nothing; enough to say he thinks it. Jacobinism grows out of your constitution; and, therefore, down with the Lords, down with the Commons; hew down the chair in one House, and the throne in the other, and let huge innovation enter.

Never was it known in the English constitution that the excesses of the popular branch were made an argument for destroying any integral part of the constitution, still less the constitution itself. The English cut off the head of Charles I.; was that made an argument, on the Restoration, for putting down the popular branch of the English constitution? James II. put down liberty; was that made an argument afterwards for putting down monarchy? The Parliament of England, in the close of the present century, lost America at the expence of above an hundred millions of debt; was that made an argument for putting down Parliament? Excesses committed

by any one integral part of the constitution have never been urged as arguments for putting down that integral part, still less for putting down the whole; and, least of all, have excesses committed by the people been urged against the constitution itself, particularly where the constitution endeavoured to restrain those excesses. I should be glad to know how he composes this Jacobinism at which he trembles. I really believe he means to impose a military government, and that his Union imports nothing less; and that the tranquillity talked of is the mere result of that intention. But he professes the contrary: he professes similarity of privilege: of course, he must leave the press of Ireland, and the power of forming clubs and associations in Ireland, on the same ground as in Great Britain, where both exist. Thus he leaves, or professes to leave, the powers of agitation, and takes away the constitution of Parliament, which is to keep them in order. He does more; he leaves a provincial government or an Irish court, without the control of a resident Parliament; for the governments are not consolidated, though the Parliaments are. He leaves that provincial court free from native control, and, of course, with great powers of provocation and irritation, and the prospect of impunity. The ministers of Union will be the ministers of the country — a wise exchange — you keep your court, and banish your constitution.

You banish your constitutional and resident Parliament, and, of course, the authority which is to restrain the abuse of power and the abuse of privilege, and this he calls a measure of tranquillity. He does more in favour of Jacobinism: he gives it a complete triumph over aristocracy. What is the claim or charge of democracy? That the upper orders are incapable to legislate for the country. You do not know the strength of your case, says the minister; you think you understand Jacobinism, but I will convince you you are mistaken; you do not know how to overset the higher order, leave it to me; I will get that higher order to echo your charge; I will propose a Union, wherein the higher order is to proclaim and register their own incapacity in the rolls of their own Parliament. Thus, I think, as far as relates to tranquillity, his own plan is a refutation of his own argument; a false and fatal idea of public tranquillity I think it; to take refuge from your own liberties in the domination of another country, and to surrender, as a pledge of peace, a constitution which you have stipulated to defend with your lives and fortunes. That constitution, I think I have shown to be adequate to the purpose of trade, and to be faithful to that of connection, but I do not think it adequate to the purpose of

surrender. This introduces a new question, the competence of Parliament to surrender the constitution. The project of Union appears to me to be nothing less than the surrender of the constitution. It reduces the Commons of Ireland to one third, leaving the Parliament of England their present proportion; it reduces the Commons of Ireland I say to one third; it transfers that third to another country, where it is merged and lost in the superior numbers of another Parliament; he strikes off two-thirds, and makes the remaining English; those Irish members residing in England, will be nominally Irish representatives, but they will cease to be Irish men; they will find England the seat of their abode, of their action, of their character; and will find, therefore, the great principles of action, viz. sympathy and fame, influencing them no longer in favour of their own country; but propellant motives to forget Ireland; to look up to England, or rather the court of England, exclusively for countenance, for advancement, and for honours, as the centre from which they circulate, and to which they tend.*

I therefore mention that the project of a Union is nothing less than to annul the Parliament of Ireland, or to transfer the legislative authority to the people of another country; to such an act the minister maintains the Irish Parliament to be competent, for, in substance, he maintains it to be omnipotent: I deny it; such an act in the Parliament, without the authority of the people, is a breach of trust. Parliament is not the proprietor, but the trustee; and the people the proprietor, and not the property. Parliament is called to make laws, not to elect law-makers; it is a body in one branch of delegates, in no one branch of electors, assembled to exercise the functions of Parliament, not to chuse or substitute another Parliament for the discharge of its own duty; it is a trustee, and like every trustee, without a power to transfer or hand over the trust; a miserable quibble it is to suppose, because delegated to make law, it has, therefore, a right to make a law to destroy its own law-making, or supersede its own delegation, precluded as it is by the essential nature of its trust from annulling its own authority, and transferring the powers of its creator, the society, to another country; it is appointed for a limited time to exercise the legislative power for the use and benefit of Ireland, and

* Puffendorf says: When one commonwealth unites with another in such manner that one keeps its government and states, and the subjects of the other change their country, and are taken into the rights and privileges of a foreign commonwealth, it is evident that one is swallowed up and lost in the other.

therefore precluded from transferring, and transferring for ever, that legislative power to the people of another country; it is appointed, entrusted, created, and ordained, not only to exercise the legislative powers of the society, but also to preserve her rights, and, instead of abolishing them by surrendering them to another country, to return them at stated periods, unimpaired, undiminished, to the people from whom they received them. I state a principle on which the House of Commons is built, supported by authorities, if any authority be requisite, "The power of the legislative," says Mr. Locke, "being derived from the people by a positive voluntary grant and institution, can be no other than what that positive grant conveyed, which being only to make laws and not legislators, the legislative can have no power to transfer their authority of making laws, and placing it in other hands, the legislative neither must, nor can, transfer the power of making laws to any body else, or place it any where, but where the people have." — "The prince," says Grotius, (speaking of princes that have the whole legislative power in themselves; the case is, however, stronger in our government,) "cannot alienate or transfer his kingdom." — "He cannot says," says Puffendorf, "transfer his subjects to be governed by a foreign power; the commonwealth itself has no power over its members other than what are granted and left by them, that first erected it; the moral or political body has not the same right over its members as the natural." Mr. Locke says, the delivery of a people into the subjection of a foreign power is a change of the legislative, and therefore a dissolution of the government; the legislative acts against the trust reposed in it, when it makes an arbitrary disposal of the lives and fortunes of the country, and he refers to Hooker, who is also authority on our side.

"The legislature," says Mr. Locke, "is not only supreme, but sacred and unalterable in the hands in which the community have placed it: though it be a supreme power in every commonwealth, yet it is not and cannot be arbitrary over the lives and fortunes of the people. It has not an absolute arbitrary power." But I have higher authority — that of the Convention of England in 1688. That convention voted that there was an original contract between the nation and the government. It follows that the nation is the proprietor of that contract, and the Parliament ministerial to fulfil the provisions of that contract, not to break it; to act within the frame of the constitution, and not to dissolve it. Accordingly, in the trial of Sacheverel, you find the argumeuts of the Commons exactly on this principle.

Mr. Lechmere as follows: — "The nature of our constitution is that of a limited monarchy, wherein the supreme power is communicated and divided between Queen, Lords, and Commons, though the executive power and administration be wholly in the Crown. The terms of such a constitution do not only suppose but express an original contract between the Crown and the people, by which that supreme power was (by mutual consent, and not by accident) limited and lodged in more hands than one; and the uniform preservation of such a constitution for many ages without any fundamental change, demonstrates to your Lordships the continuance of the same contract."

Sir Joseph Jekyl: — "Nothing is plainer than that the people have a right to the laws and the constitution. This right the nation hath asserted and recovered out of the hands of those who had dispossessed them of it at several times."

Mr. Bushel. — He says: "Indeed it is difficult to give limits to the mere abstract competence of the supreme power, but the limits of a moral competence, subjecting occasional will to permanent reason, and to the steady maxims of faith, justice, and fixed fundamental policy, are perfectly intelligible, and perfectly binding on those who exercise any authority under any name or under any title in the state. The House of Lords is not morally competent to dissolve itself, nor to abdicate, if it would, its portion of the legislature of the kingdom. By as strong, or a stronger reason, the House of Commons cannot renounce its share of authority. The engagement and *pact of society* which generally goes by the name of constitution, forbids such innovation and such surrender. The constituent parts of a state must hold their public faith with each other, and with all those who derive a serious interest under their engagement, as much as the whole state is bound to keep its faith with separate communities. Otherwise competence and power would be entirely confounded, and no law left but the will of a prevailing force."

"The collective body of the people," says Bolingbroke, "delegate, but do not give up; trust, but do not alienate their right and power. There is something which a Parliament cannot do; a Parliament cannot annul the constitution. The legislature is a supreme, but not an arbitrary power."

"The power of King, Lords, and Commons," says Junius, "is not an arbitrary power. They are the trustees, not the owners of the estate. The fee-simple is in us; they cannot alienate, they cannot waste. When we say the legislature is supreme, we swear that it is the highest power known to the constitution, that it is the highest in comparison with the

other subordinate powers established by the laws. In this sense, the word supreme is relative not absolute. The power of the legislature is limited, not only by the general rules of natural justice and the welfare of the community, but by the forms and principles of our particular constitution. If this doctrine be not true, we must admit that King, Lords, and Commons, have no rule to direct their resolutions, but merely their own will and pleasure. They might unite the legislature and executive power in the same hands, and dissolve the constitution by an act of Parliament: but I am persuaded you will not leave it to the choice of 700 persons, notoriously corrupted by the Crown, whether seven millions of their equals shall be freemen or slaves."

The latter part of this quotation will not apply to the Irish Parliament. But could we suppose the intrigues of a minister to be successful — could we suppose that, by intimidating some, bribing others, influencing all, he could procure in both Houses of Parliament a majority to annul the Parliament itself, and transfer the legislative to another country, the judicial, the controling, the impeaching, and all the powers in that great denomination signified and comprehended — could we suppose that the minister purposes to buy the Irish Parliament as his proposal to compensate the extinguished boroughs imports, and that he comes to offer 1,500,000*l.* to buy up the Irish Parliament at the expence of the Irish people, who are to pay that million and a half for losing it. I say, could we suppose such a case, the question on that supposition propounded would be nothing more nor less than this — whether the individuals composing the legislative body have a right, for their own profit, to sell the Parliament of the country? To affirm that they cannot, requires scarcely any other argument than the honest instinct of the human mind, the moral sense implanted in the heart of man, and the rudiments of right and wrong registered in every breast.

The English minister thinks otherwise; he pronounces the Irish Parliament absolute; he gives no reason; he who denied the power of France to alter her government, maintains the omnipotence of the Irish Parliament to annul her constitution; he, whose Parliament protested against its competence, now affirms its omnipotence! He supports this false doctrine by the confusion and inapplication of his cases; he confounds the case of a Parliament accepting of the legislative dominion of another country with the treachery of the Parliament of that country, betraying, transferring, or selling that legislative power. What! does he mean to say that the Parliament of England is competent to transfer to Ireland the

legislature of Great Britain? Does he mean to say that she is competent to reduce the number to an insignificant proportion, and transfer that part and the seat of legislation, that is the English legislation itself to the French legislation at Paris; yet I believe, if the French council should choose to transfer the legislation of France to the Parliament of Westminster, England would scarcely hesitate on the subject of her own competency; the one is the competency of acquisition; the competency of diminution; the competency of aggrandisement: the other is the competency of treason; the competence of delinquency; the competency of abdication.

When he compares this case with the reform of Parliament, he is equally feeble and fallacious: he argues that to restore the third estate to the Commons, to whom his friends argue it belongs, and to destroy, with that view, in a few individuals, the monopoly of popular franchise, to whom on no principle of constitution it can belong; that is, to revive the principle of representation, is tantamount to an act abolishing in substance and effect the representation itself, and annihilating the King, Lords, and Commons of this realm. He compares the pruning the tree, that it may bear fruit, to the taking it out of the earth root and all. He does not confine himself to one instance of inapplication; the pages swarm with them. He proceeds to compare the case of the repeal of statute disabilities with an act imposing disability on the whole realm: he compares the act restoring the Catholic to the elective franchise, to an act disfranchising not a particular man, not a particular sect, but in substance and effect the whole kingdom. From the inapplication of his cases, he proceeds to the errors of his doctrine: there he says that absolute power of Parliament is necessary for the repose of the state. He thinks that the state of society is best secured when there is a body always in existence competent to overturn, or sell her constitution. He thinks that the happiness of mankind is best promoted when a daring desperate minister (I know of no minister more daring or desperate) shall be able, by packing a Parliament, to overturn the liberties of the people. He thinks their happiness worst preserved when the body competent to overturn them is not assembled; and when the body that is assembled has not the competency; and when both these secure the freedom and eternity of the society by the repose of her powers. For this doctrine, I say the minister has given no reasons; he has been equally sparing of his authorities. Had his friends done the same, they would have been more prudent.

They indeed have quoted Lord Somers as an authority, to

prove the power of Parliament to surrender the legislative authority of one country to another, confounding the case of a surrender with the case of an acceptance. Lord Somers is authority (and so would every judge and every English lawyer), that if any one legislature, or that if all the legislatures on earth were willing to surrender all the rights, privileges, and inheritances of the globe to Great Britain, her Parliament stand ready to accept them. He states, that this his doctrine is particularly true in a mixed constitution like that of England; it is exactly the contrary: it is particularly false in a mixed government like that of England; in a country where the crown is held by recorded compact, and the Parliament sits by temporary representation. It is peculiarly false in a country where the Parliament and the Crown stand upon the powers of the society, interposing without any authority but that of the society, and assembled in a most respectable and comprehensive description, and with the assent of the great body of the nation, deposing one King, electing another, and constituting a Parliament, and such awe did they entertain for their constitution, that they acted as a convention but for a moment, to set up a Parliament for an eternity; to do what? To repair every thing, to preserve every thing, and to abolish nothing, save only the abuses that threatened to abolish the constitution. On this subject he not only errs in his reasoning, but his conception of reasoning on the subject is fallacy and error; he affects to measure the elements of human justice by the elements of British empire. Do not admit the principle of justice, do not admit human right, else what becomes of our conquest of Wales, else what becomes of our Union with Scotland. He might have gone on; he might have extended his argument to the East and West Indies. Had the British Parliament succeeded in its attempts on America, he would have more arguments of this nature; but what is all this to us? If Scotland chose to transfer her legislature to England, or if Wales were conquered, is that a reason why Ireland should admit the competency of the Parliament to surrender her rights, or the justice and validity of a right of conquest? The fact is, that the acquiescence of Scotland for a century, and the acquiescence of Wales for many centuries, have become the laws of these respective countries: the practice and the consent of nations for periods of time become their laws, and make the original act of combination, whether it be conquest or treachery, no longer scrutable nor material. In a course of years, conquest may be the foundation of connection, and rape of marriage; such has been, not seldom, the elements

of empire; but such are not the elements of justice. The principles of right and wrong so intermix in centuries of human dealing as to become inseparable like light and shade; but does it follow that there is no such thing as light and shade; no such thing as right and wrong. I am sure that the right of England to the acquisitions above stated are perfectly sound and unquestionable; I should be sorry it were otherwise; and, therefore, I am exceedingly glad it does not rest on the ground on which he has placed it.

I might, however, wave all this, and produce against him two authorities; to either of which, in this case, he must submit; the one is the Parliament of Ireland, the other is himself. After having denied in substance the power of the people, which he calls a sovereignty in abeyance; and after having maintained, in terms absolutely unqualified, the unlimited authority of Parliament; that is, its omnipotence, he does acknowledge reluctantly, and at length, that Parliament is not unlimited; and that there does exist in the society a power in abeyance. He tells you there may be a case of abuse calling for the interference of the people collectively, or of a great portion thereof, as at the Revolution of 1688. I suppose now, if there can be such a case of abuse calling for such an interference, there must be a power in abeyance to answer that call, and to question that abuse; and the point in dispute is not touching the application of that power but its existence. The other authority, namely the Parliament of Ireland, has publicly, solemnly, and unanimously, disclaimed and renounced, in the following memorable and eternal expressions, any competency whatever to transfer or surrender the unalienable right and inheritance of the people of Ireland, to be governed by no other Parliament whatsoever, save only the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland — "The right of the people of Ireland to be subject to laws made by the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, and no other, is their ancient inheritance, which we claim on our part and on theirs, and which we cannot surrender but with life." What will the minister say now? But he has more difficulties against him; he has his own authority, against his own project. He states, that his object is identification of people; he says, it is not the English navy, it is not the English militia, nor the English treasury, nor the Irish yeoman, nor the Irish Parliament, that can save you; they may by chance succeed; but your great dependance is the identification of the people of the two nations. He states further, that this identification is necessary for a present purpose, namely the defence of the empire against the ambition of France; here then is the great prin-

ciple of his Union, as expressed by himself, the identification of the people of the two nations, for a present purpose. According to that principle, let us examine his project; it is not an identification of people, as it excludes the Catholic from the Parliament and the state; it is not an identification of government, for it retains the Lord-lieutenant and his court; it not an identification of establishments; it is not an identification of revenue; it is not an identification of commerce, for you have still relative duties, and countervailing duties; it is not an identification of interest, because England relieves herself as she increases the proportion of Irish taxation, and diminishes her burdens, by communicating them to Ireland. The present constitution may be said to be nearly an equal trade, and an equal liberty, and the Union to be a tax and a drawback upon that equal trade, and upon that equal liberty; for so much a diminution of that identification of interests, if it be not an identification of interests, still less is it an identification of feeling and of sympathy. The Union, then, is not an identification of the two nations; it is merely a merger of the Parliament of one nation, in that of the other; one nation, namely England, retains her full proportion; Ireland strikes off two-thirds; she does so, without any regard either to her present number, or to comparative physical strength; she is more than one-third in population, in territory, and less than one-sixth in representation. Thus there is no identification in any thing, save only in legislature, in which there is a complete and absolute absorption.

It follows, that the two nations are not identified, though the Irish legislature be absorbed, and, by that act of absorption, the feelings of one of the nations is not identified but alienated. The petitions on our table bespeak that alienation; the administration must by this time be acquainted with it; they must know that Union is Irish alienation, and, knowing that, they must be convinced that they have the authority of the minister's argument against the minister's project. I am not surprised that this project of Union should alienate the Irish; they consider it as a blow. Two honourable gentlemen have expressed that sentiment with an ardour which does them honour;* ingenuous young men, they have spoken with unsophisticated feeling, and the native honesty of good sense. The question is not now such as occupied you of old, not old Poynings, not peculation, not plunder, not an embargo, not a Catholic bill, not a reform bill — it is your being — it is more, — it is your life to come, whether you will go with the Castle at your head to the tomb of Charlemont and the volun-

* Mr. O'Donnell, and Col. Vereker.

teers, and erase his epitaph; or whether your children shall go to your graves, saying a venal, a military court, attacked the liberties of the Irish, and here lie the bones of the honourable dead men who saved their country! Such an epitaph is a nobility which the King cannot give his slaves; it is a glory which the crown cannot give the King.

Mr. Corry replied to Mr. Grattan.

The House divided; — Ayes 160, including tellers, Noes 117; Majority in favour of a Union 43. Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. U. Fitzgerald, and the Solicitor-general (Mr. Stewart); tellers for the Noes, Mr. Dawson and Colonel Vereker.

The following is the List of those who voted against the Union.

Acheson, Hon. A.
Alcock, W. C.
Armstrong, W. H.
Archdall, Mervyn
Babbington, David
Bagwell, John
Bagwell, John jun.
Bagwell, W.
Ball, John
Barry, Col. John Maxwell
Balfour, Blaney
Beresford, J. C.
Blakeney, W.
Brooke, H. V.
Burton, W.
Bushe, Charles
Butler, Sir Richard
Burrows, Peter
Carew, R. S.
Clements, Lord
Cole, Lord
Cooper, Jos. Edward
Corry, Lord Vis.
Daly, D. B.
Dalway, Noah
Dawson, Richard, T.
Dawson, Arthur
Dobbs, Francis
Edgeworth, R. L.
Egan, John
Evans, George
Falkiner, Frederick John
Fetherston, Sir Thomas
Fitzgerald, Rt. Hon. James
Fortescue, W. Charles
Fortescue, Chichester
Foster, Hon. Thomas
Freke, Sir John, Bart.
French, Arthur
Gorges, Hamilton
Goold, Thomas
Grattan, Henry
Hamilton, Hans
Hardman, Edward
Hardy, Francis
Hamilton, Hon. A. C
Hoare, Sir Joseph
Hoare Edward
Hume, W. Hoare
Irwin, H.
King, Gilbert
King, John
King, Hon. Robert.
King, Rt. Hon. Henry
Knox, Hon. G.
Lambert, Gustavus
Latouche, John
Latouche, John, jun.
Latouche, Robert
Leslie, Charles Powell
Lee, Edward
Lighton, Sir Thomas
Macartney, Sir John
Maxwell, Lord
Matthew, Lord
Mahon, Thomas
Metge, John
Montgomery, Alexander
Moore, Arthur
Moore, Stephen, (Clonmell)
Moore, John
O'Brien, Sir Edward
O'Callaghan, Hon. W.
O'Donnell James M.
Ogle, Rt. Hon. G.
O'Hara, Charles
Osborne, Henry
Parnell, Sir John,
Parnell, Henry
Parsons, Sir Lau.
Plunket, William C.
Ponsonby, R. H. W. Brab.
Ponsonby, J. B.
Ponsonby, Major W.

Ponsonby, George
Power, Richard
Preston, Joseph
Reilly, John
Reilly, W. E.
Richardson, Sir W.
Rochfort, Gustavus
Rochfort, John St.
Rowley, Clotworthy
Rowley, S. C.
Rowley, W.
Ruxton, W.
Ruxton, W. P.
Saunderson, Francis
Savage, Francis, *T.*
Saurin, W.
Shaw, Robert
Skeffington, Hon. W. J.
Smith, W. (Westmeath)
Stewart, James
St. George, Sir R.
Synge, Francis
Taylor, John
Tighe, William
Tighe, Henry
Townshend, Thomas
Vereker, Charles, *T.*
Waller, John
Westby, Nic.
Whaley, Thomas
Wilson, E. D.
Wolfe, John
Wynne, Owen

The following is a List of those who voted for the Union.

Alexander, H.
Alexander, Hon. D.
Archdall, R.
Annesley, Rt. Hon. Richard
Bailey, W.
Beresford, Rt. Hon. J.
Beresford, J. jun.
Beresford, Col. M.
Bingham, J.
Blake, Joseph Henry
Blackwood, Sir. J. S.
Blaquiere, Sir J.
Bligh, Thomas
Bligh Edward
Boyle, Lord
Brown, Right Hon. D., *T.*
Browne, Arthur
Bruce, Stewart
Burton, Hon. Col.
Burdett, George
Bunbury, G.
Butler, Hon. J.
Castlereagh, Lord
Cavendish, G.
Cavendish, Sir. H.
Cane, James
Casey, Thomas
Chinnery, Sir Broderick
Cope, Col. R. C.
Cooke, E.
Coote, C. H.
Corry, Right Hon. Isaac
Cotter, Sir J.
Cotter, R.
Cradock, Gen.
Crosbie, James
Crosbie, W. A.
Creighton, Hon. A.
Creighton, Hon. J.
Cuffe, J.
Daly, St. G.
Duigenan, Pat.
Elliot, William
Eustace, General
Eustace, Major
Ferguson, A.
Fitzgerald, Lord Charles
Fitzgerald, R. U.
Forward, Rt. Hon. W
Fortescue, Sir C.
Fox, Luke
Fortescue, Faithful
Galbraith, J.
Gardiner, General
Gore, W.
Grady, H. D.
Gregory, W.
Hare, Richard
Hare, W.
Hatton, G.
Handcock, William
Henniker, Gen. B.
Herbert, Richard
Holmes, Peter
Hobson, John
Howard, Hugh
Hutchinson, Hon. M. G.
Hutchinson, Hon. F. H.
Hunt, Sir Vere
Jackson, Col. G.
Jephson, Denh.
Jocelyn, Hon. J.
Jones, W.
Jones, Theophilus

Jackson, Major Geo.
Johnson, W.
Johnson, Robert
Keane, John
Kearney, James
Kemmis, Henry
Knott, William
Knox, James
Knox, Andrew
Lake, Gen.
Langrishe, Rt. Hon. Sir H.
Latouche, Rt. Hon. David
Leigh, Francis
Lindsay, Thomas, jun.
Longfield, John
Longfield, Capt. J.
Longfield, Montiford
Loftus, Lord
Loftus, General
M'Namara, Francis
Mahon, Ross
Mahon, James
Martin, Richard
Mason, Rt. Hon. J. M.
Massey, H. D.
Magennis, Richard
May, Edward
Miller, G.
M'Naghton, E. A.
Moore, S.
Moore, N. M.
Morris, Rt. Hon. Lodge
Musgrave, Sir R.
M'Cleland, James
M'Donnell, Col. Charles
Mc Clean, John
Nesbit, Thomas
Newcomen, Sir W.
Neville, Richard
Odell, William
Ormsby, J. M.
Ormsby, C. M.
Osborne, Charles
Pakenham, T.
Pakenham, Col. Edw.
Penefather, R.
Pepper Thomas,
Preston, John
Prittie, H. S.
Prendergast, T.
Quin, Sir Richard
Ram, Abel
Reade, G. H.
Roche, Sir Boyle
Rowley, Hon. C
Rutledge, R
Sandford, H. M.
Savage, J.
Sharkey, R.
Shee, Sir George
Singleton, Col.
Skeffington, Hon H.
Smith, W.
Stanley, Edmond
Staples, John
Stewart, John
Stratton, John
Stratford, Hon. J.
Talbot, W.
Tighe, Robert
Toler, Rt. Hon. J.
Tottenham, Charles
Tottenham, P.
Townsend, John
Trench, Frederick
Trench, Hon. Richard
Trench, Hon. Charles
Tyrone, Earl of
Uniacke, Robert
Vandeleur, J. O.
Verner, James
Walsh, P.
Ward, Hon. R.
Wemys, Colonel
Westenra, Henry
Woodward, Benjamin B.

UNION.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (MR. CORRY), MOVES THE FIRST RESOLUTION.

February 14. 1800.

SEVERAL members were sworn in and took their seats. Petitions against the Union were, on this and the preceding days, presented from the counties of Carlow, the King's County, the counties of Leitrim, Kildare, Down, Westmeath, Roscommon, Armagh, Clare, Louth, Cork, Monaghan, Donegall; the towns of Carrickfergus, Drogheda, Newry, Maryborough, Downpatrick, and Portarlington. They expressed the great concern of the petitioners at finding the measure again introduced into Parliament after its rejection the year preceding; and they prayed that the constitution established by the final settlement of 1782, might be maintained inviolate. The House went into a committee; Mr. Annesley in the chair. Mr. Corry (Chancellor of the Exchequer) stated that the measure of Union necessarily took its rise from the imperfections of the constitution of 1782, as well as from the religious dissensions and political convulsions that had agitated the country for a considerable time past. He entered into an historical account of the state of the two parties, Protestant and Catholic; and represented the Union as the measure most likely to put an end to their dissensions; that neither the free trade nor free constitution had procured tranquillity for the country. The questions of the commercial propositions, of the regency, and of the French Revolution, exposed the country to considerable danger: he alluded to the French decree of November 1792; and compared the speeches and publications that of late had appeared in Ireland as similar to it in tendency, and as encouraging treason and rebellion. He read part of Mr. Grattan's address to the citizens of Dublin in 1797, and argued that it preached the doctrine of insurrection under the name of liberty, and led to the rebellion that followed. He attacked the constitution as settled in 1782, and pronounced it entirely incompetent to promote the advantage of the kingdom, or support the connection between the two countries. That the Union was become necessary to prevent degeneration; and that it would prove advantageous to Ireland, whether we considered the expences or the commerce of the country. He concluded by moving the first resolution.

Mr. GRATTAN said: That with respect to the subject before the House, it had been already discussed; and, *indeed*, the honourable gentleman had tripped over the ground with so light a foot, as to have made but little impression. He thought, from the manner of the honourable gentleman's

speech, that the subject had been deserted; he did not mean intentionally deserted, but, there was in the whole of the honourable gentleman's speech something so frivolous, so inane, that he seemed rather to be a courtier adjusting his argument before a looking-glass, than a senator speaking on the affairs of a great country. The honourable gentleman seemed to supply his deficiency of ability and of reasoning by personality, and he did not think the honourable gentleman deficient in personal satire, though he thought him very deficient in point of argument; instead of argument he had substituted slander. The honourable gentleman seemed to set the propriety and the necessity of the Union upon the ground of Catholic emancipation, parliamentary reform, particular speeches made in that House, and publications on political subjects out of the House. Respecting reform, it had been once attempted to stifle that measure in a perpetual mutiny bill. The honourable gentleman supported that bill when it was brought in; and, he remembered that the very same gentleman afterwards voted that bill to be a grievance. It was attempted to stifle parliamentary reform by selling to the British minister the Irish Parliament. By a Union of the two legislatures, the honourable gentleman hoped to quiet the minds of the people, and for ever put to rest the idea of parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, by purchasing the Parliament of Ireland with the money of the people. It reminded him of the poet's description,

> Wisely hoping party rage would cease,
> He buys both sides to give the country peace.

Was there to be no such thing as publications on political subjects in the country? Did the honourable gentleman believe that the Parliament of the country would be removed without the people hearing of it? Was there to be no freedom of the press, was that to be removed also with the Parliament? Let not the honourable gentleman speak or hope so wildly as to say, that because the Parliament is to be removed, there shall be no publications. The suppression of public opinion, through the medium of the press, might be more dangerous than the freedom of discussion. Was the only way to stop the licentiousness of the press, to stop the grievance, to take away the materials. What, says he, is the grievance? — the Parliament. The honourable gentleman had read a letter of his; give me leave to say the honourable gentleman has misrepresented every period of it. There was not a passage related by the honourable gentleman that was fairly stated to the House, and though he misrepresented

them to answer his own purpose, yet he was unable to argue upon them; and, therefore, it would have been wiser for the honourable gentleman not to have used them. The honourable gentleman had stated a sentence out of that publication, which he endeavoured to establish as intended against the present Parliament, which he must have well known did not apply to this Parliament, but to the borough Parliament of James I.; it alluded to the packed Parliament of that reign. Will the honourable gentleman deny that Parliament was packed? Will he deny that the retainers of the Castle had endeavoured to destroy the liberties of the country? Will he defend that Parliament? Will he deny that fact? Will he say the attempt to pack a Parliament was never made by any minister? Will he say it was not attempted in the time of Lord Buckingham? The honourable gentleman had misrepresented him in other instances, and endeavoured to apply the paragraphs to the existing Parliament, and in a language that any man of sense would have been ashamed of. He must have well known that some of the observations in that publication applied to the Parliament of 1769, which Lord Townshend boasted of; and a Parliament similar to which the ministry had since boasted they had procured at the expence of half a million. I have heard, and always thought, that the influence of the Crown might overturn the constitution. Have not attempts been made on the integrity of the Parliament to induce it to give itself up? Can any man believe that any minister could be so daring, so bold, as to think, by a public robbery, to steal the Parliament out of the country; that any minister can have the impudence to ask a free and independent Parliament to sell itself to Great Britain? Will the honourable gentleman look the House of Commons of Ireland in the face, and boldly and honestly tell the House, that no minister at any time has attempted to bribe Parliament to vote away its own existence? If the honourable gentleman will get up and deny this, I will be glad to hear him. Will the honourable gentleman say, that no minister in any country ever attempted to do such an act?

The honourable gentleman has told the House, that the inflammatory speeches that had been made in the House, and the inflammatory publications that had been given to the public out of the House, had excited the public mind, and irritated the public feeling. But the honourable gentleman must well know he is wrong in his statement; for he must have no doubt seen the declaration of O'Connor, and two other persons; and what was their declaration? That they

had formed their connection with France, before ever those speeches were made; and they had declared, if, at that time, parliamentary reform had been acceded to, they would have broken off that connection. The honourable gentleman must know, that those persons declared they had no intercourse with the opposition, but on the subject of reform. But when the honourable gentleman comes into the House of Commons of Ireland, with a treasonable motion in his hand, with a conspiracy against the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland; it is natural for him to charge an honest and an independent man, with the crime of which he is himself is guilty; and to charge the true and sincere friends and supporters of the constitution, with unqualified, abominable, and contemptible calumny.

If I was to say what was the cause of the rebellion that aggrieved this country; if I was to say what was the cause of those convulsions that agitated the kingdom, I would say it was not the parliamentary declaimer that was the cause; it was not the publications out of the House that was the cause; but it was the parliamentary pedlar, first speculating for bread, and then for station; this caused the discontents of the country. I lament the blots of the body, and I pity the individual; I look with respect towards the body itself, because I know it possesses a salient principle, which is the pledge of future virtue. There were defects in the constitution; this side of the House wanted to remove them; they tried to cure the disorder, but the other side decried the medicine; they refused to give relief; they thought, and they said, "the patient is so ill, do not try to cure him; he is past cure; kill him at once." What is the complaint? The patient has a pain in his head; give him what will relieve him; no; that will not do, say the other side; the disorder is incurable; cut off his head! They first oppose the cure of the constitution, and then they propose the death of it.

With respect to that part of the honourable gentleman's speech which went to a want of responsibility in the minister, I will examine it. What is the argument? That the constitution of Ireland is not sufficient to secure the responsibility of the Irish minister. The English minister certainly is not responsible to this country, but the Irish minister is, if he does not run away from the country; but if he runs from the country and from punishment, he then is not responsible, and public justice would probably be eluded. What was the case of the Marquis of Buckingham? He was obliged to pacify the House, or he could not have staid in the country. The constitution is not so bad as the honourable gentleman wished to insinuate.

With respect to trade and to treaties, where is the security, if the Parliament is removed, that either will be protected by the imperial Parliament? Ireland has as much influence as her wealth and her population entitled her to. The honourable gentleman said that the power of this country was great in the scale of war, and, that to get rid of that power the country must give up her Parliament. If this country could not control Great Britain in making or carrying on war, it was because the population of England was ten millions, and that of Ireland only four. Suppose the King of England to reside in Ireland, would not the Parliament of England still have more power than that of Ireland, because the physical force of the country would continue. How does the noble lord mean to supply the weakness of this country, and give it more strength? by taking away the Parliament! Three hundred men of fortune and independence in Ireland were not sufficient to control the country in matters that concerned the country alone, and, therefore, let the three hundred men be reduced to one hundred, and let those hundred men be sent to England, and then what will be consequence? Why, there will be no power at all. It has been denied that the country possessed any constitution; it is now asserted that the country had a constitution; and it is asserted that the country is so powerful, she ought to give up her constitution. It was endeavoured to be imposed on the people of Ireland, that they ought to be satisfied with any constitution. If the constitution be not sufficient for all the purposes of power, which I deny, it is no constitution; it may require some alterations, but the great object of the people of Ireland ought to be to preserve it, and uphold that independence which the minister would put to the sword.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied, and made other quotations from Mr. Grattan's pamphlet, and attacked him on the subject of his speeches and writings, which, he said, had assisted to excite the rebellion. He concluded a violent personal attack, by charging him with having associated with disaffected characters.

Mr. GRATTAN replied: Has the gentleman done? Has he completely done? He was unparliamentary from the beginning to the end of his speech. There was scarce a word he uttered that was not a violation of the privileges of the House; but I did not call him to order — why? because the limited talents of some men render it impossible for them to be severe without being unparliamentary. But before I sit down

I shall show him how to be severe and parliamentary at the same time. On any other occasion I should think myself justifiable in treating with silent contempt any thing which might fall from that honourable member; but there are times when the insignificance of the accuser is lost in the magnitude of the accusation. I know the difficulty the honourable gentleman laboured under when he attacked me, conscious that, on a comparative view of our characters, public and private, there is nothing he could say which would injure me. The public would not believe the charge. I despise the falsehood. If such a charge were made by an honest man, I would answer it in the manner I shall do before I sit down. But I shall first reply to it when not made by an honest man.

The right honourable gentleman has called me "an unimpeached traitor." I ask, why not "traitor," unqualified by any epithet? I will tell him; it was because he dare not. It was the act of a coward, who raises his arm to strike, but has not courage to give the blow. I will not call him villain, because it would be unparliamentary, and he is a privy counsellor. I will not call him fool because he happens to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. But I say he is one who has abused the privilege of Parliament and freedom of debate, to the uttering language, which, if spoken out of the House, I should answer only with a blow. I care not how high his situation, how low his character, how contemptible his speech; whether a privy counsellor or a parasite, my answer would be a blow. He has charged me with being connected with the rebels: the charge is utterly, totally, and meanly false. Does the honourable gentleman rely on the report of the House of Lords for the foundation of his assertion? If he does, I can prove to the committee there was a physical impossibility of that report being true. But I scorn to answer any man for my conduct, whether he be a political coxcomb, or whether he brought himself into power by a false glare of courage or not. I scorn to answer any wizard of the Castle throwing himself into fantastical airs. But if an honourable and independent man were to make a charge against me, I would say, "You charge me with having an intercourse with rebels, and you found your charge upon what is said to have appeared before a committee of the Lords. Sir, the report of that committee is totally and eggregiously irregular." I will read a letter from Mr. Nelson, who had been examined before that committee; it states that what the report represents him as having spoken, is *not what he said.* Mr. Grattan here read the letter from Mr. Nelson, denying that he had any connection with Mr. Grattan as charged in the report; and conclud-

ing by saying, "*never was misrepresentation more vile than that put into my mouth by the report.*"

From the situation that I held, and from the connections I had in the city of Dublin, it was necessary for me to hold intercourse with various descriptions of persons. The right honourable member might as well have been charged with a participation in the guilt of those traitors; for he had communicated with some of those very persons on the subject of parliamentary reform. The Irish government too were in communication with some of them.

The right honourable member has told me I deserted a profession where wealth and station were the reward of industry and talent. If I mistake not, that gentleman endeavoured to obtain those rewards by the same means; but he soon deserted the occupation of a barrister for those of a parasite and pander. He fled from the labour of study to flatter at the table of the great. He found the lords' parlour a better sphere for his exertions than the hall of the four courts; the house of a great man a more convenient way to power and to place; and that it was easier for a statesman of middling talents to sell his friends than a lawyer of no talents to sell his clients.

For myself, whatever corporate or other bodies have said or done to me, I, from the bottom of my heart, forgive them. I feel I have done too much for my country to be vexed at them. I would rather that they should not feel or acknowledge what I have done for them, and call me traitor, than have reason to say I sold them. I will always defend myself against the assassin; but with large bodies it is different. To the people I will bow: they may be my enemy — I never shall be theirs.

At the emancipation of Ireland, in 1782, I took a leading part in the foundation of that constitution which is now endeavoured to be destroyed. Of that constitution I was the author; in that constitution I glory; and for it the honourable gentleman should bestow praise, not invent calumny. Notwithstanding my weak state of body, I come to give my last testimony against this Union, so fatal to the liberties and interest of my country. I come to make common cause with these honourable and virtuous gentlemen around me; to try and save the constitution; or if not save the constitution, at least to save our characters, and remove from our graves the foul disgrace of standing apart while a deadly blow is aimed at the independence of our country.

The right honourable gentleman says I fled from the country after exciting rebellion; and that I have returned to raise

another. No such thing. The charge is false. The civil war had not commenced when I left the kingdom; and I could not have returned without taking a part. On the one side there was the camp of the rebel; on the other, the camp of the minister, a greater traitor than that rebel. The strong hold of the constitution was no where to be found. I agree that the rebel who rises against the government should have suffered; but I missed on the scaffold the right honourable gentleman. Two desperate parties were in arms against the constitution. The right honourable gentleman belonged to one of those parties, and deserved death. I could not join the rebel — I could not join the government — I could not join torture — I could not join half-hanging — I could not join free quarter — I could take part with neither. I was, therefore, absent from a scene where I could not be active without self-reproach, nor indifferent with safety.

Many honourable gentlemen thought differently from me: I respect their opinions; but I keep my own; and I think now, as I thought then, *that the treason of the minister against the liberties of the people was infinitely worse than the rebellion of the people against the minister.*

I have returned, not as the right honourable member has said, to raise another storm — I have returned to discharge an honourable debt of gratitude to my country, that conferred a great reward for past services, which, I am proud to say, was not greater than my desert. I have returned to protect that constitution, of which I was the parent and the founder, from the assassination of such men as the right honourable gentleman and his unworthy associates. They are corrupt — they are seditious — and they, at this very moment, are in a conspiracy against their country. I have returned to refute a libel, as false as it is malicious, given to the public under the appellation of a report of the committee of the Lords. Here I stand ready for impeachment or trial: I dare accusation. I defy the honourable gentleman; I defy the government; I defy their whole phalanx: let them come forth. I tell the ministers I will neither give them quarter nor take it. I am here to lay the shattered remains of my constitution on the floor of this House, in defence of the liberties of my country. *

* In consequence of the altercation between Mr. Grattan and Mr. Corry, a meeting took place, of which the following is the statement, as authenticated by the signatures of the seconds, General Cradock and Captain Metge.

Tuesday Morning, 18th February 1800.

In consequence of what passed in debate in the House of Commons early on Monday evening, the 17th inst. Major-general Cradock, on the part of Mr. Corry, waited on Mr. Grattan, in the Speaker's chamber, and proposed a meeting immediately on the rising of the House, to which Mr. Grattan

The motion was supported by General Hutchinson, Mr. Martin, Mr. Alexander, Colonel Coote, Mr. Ross Mahon, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Berresfod, Mr. W. Smith (afterwards Judge), Mr. P. Hutchinson, Sir Boyle Roche, Mr. William Johnson, Mr. Browne, Dr. Duigenan.

It was opposed by Mr. W. Tighe, Mr. Balfour, Sir John Parnell, who moved that the chairman should leave the chair, Mr. Foster (the Speaker), Mr. Dawson, Mr. Egan, Mr. Peter Burrowes, Mr. G. Ponsonby, Mr. Ogle, Mr. Goold, Colonel Barry, and Mr. O'Donnell.

In support of the measure it was urged, that the existing constitution of the Irish Parliament could not last; it had not proved competent to preserve the national tranquillity; it had ceased to be public right, and had become private property: the security of the country would be increased by the measure; and the claims of the Catholics would be attended to in the imperial Parliament, without the risk of separation. Doctor Browne explained the reason for the change in his sentiments. The violence during the late insurrection, and the conduct of government, had so disgusted and shocked him, that he thought it better to trust to the superintendance of the British Parliament. General Hutchinson stated, that Ireland had been misgoverned for centuries; that reformation seemed impossible; and that all hopes of improvement and national greatness were at an end; and that the conduct of a united Parliament would be more wise, fair, and honourable towards Ireland.

It was urged by the members who opposed the Union, that the countries were concluded by the settlement of 1782; that the Union was a base surrender of their liberty and independence; and that the inducements that were held out to the Catholics were only meant to deceive them. With respect to the calculations of the Chancellor

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assented. At day-light the gentlemen proceeded to the field, and the ground being taken, the parties fired according to agreement by a word, when Mr. Corry was wounded in the left arm; the gentlemen presented their second pistols, but neither firing on the word, they remained in that situation. After a short pause, the seconds demanded what was the matter; and having given the word again, the gentlemen presented a second time, but without firing, each calling on the other to fire, it being evidently the intention of each party not to fire the second shot at the other. Mr. Corry proposed aloud to Mr. Grattan that both should give their honour to fire together, upon the word being given again, to which Mr. Grattan agreed, and at the word, they both fired together accordingly, after which they quitted the ground, the Sheriff having been some time in the field using his efforts to prevent the proceedings. In passing from the ground, Mr. Grattan enquiring with anxiety of General Cradock, whether Mr. Corry was much hurt; in consequence of such enquiry, and their mutual conduct in the field, General Cradock observed to Mr. Metge, that it was to be regretted that the parties had separated without some exchange of compliment: to which Mr. Metge replied immediately, it was his entire wish that it should take place. Mr. Grattan then proceeded to the house where Mr. Corry was engaged with his surgeon, and they exchanged mutual civilities.

JOHN FRANCIS CRADOCK.
JOHN METGE.

the Exchequer, it was observed by Sir John Parnell, that they were not supported by the real situation of the country; and if the expences and revenue were fairly taken, the proportion would not be as the noble lord stated it, as seven to one and a half, but as one to thirteen. The Speaker (Mr. Foster), who, in the former session, had made so able a defence of the constitution of his country, entered at length into the subject, and repeated the arguments advanced by the other side, on the subject of trade and revenue. He said, that since the free Parliament had been obtained, the country had risen in wealth, trade, and manufactures, more than any other country in the world in the same period; to what was this to be imputed, but to the free constitution, and the minister now calls on us to destroy it; was this the return for our loyalty and spirit in quelling the late insurrection? It was no Union, it was merely an extinction of Parliament; there was no other reduction of any kind. The Lord-lieutenant, the civil establishment, the military establishment, the Exchequer, the secretaries, commissioners, all remained, nothing was abolished, except the Parliament; instead of strengthening the country, this measure would enfeeble it. Would driving men of property out of the kingdom settle and tranquillize it? Would creating gallowses in the country, would flogging the inhabitants tranquillize the country? Would keeping alive religious dissentions tranquillize the country; and was it to tranquillize this country that those religious dissensions were raised and continued? Gentlemen of this side of the House are for preserving the liberties of the country; those of the other side are for plunging her into confusion.

The committee divided;— For the question 115, against it 161; Majority 46.

UNION.

THE HOUSE GOES INTO A COMMITTEE ON THE UNION RESOLUTIONS.

February 28. 1800.

ON this and the preceding days, petitions against the Union were presented from the cotton-spinners, the bankers, traders and merchants of Dublin, from the corporation of Drogheda, the freeholders of Dublin, from the city of Waterford, and from the counties of Donegall, Mayo, Wicklow, Meath, Tyrone, Kilkenny, Antrim, and Waterford. The House then went into a committee on the Union resolutions. They were supported by Mr. J. Beresford, Lord Castlereagh, Sir John Blaquiere, and Mr. Robert Johnson (afterwards judge). They were opposed by the Speaker (Mr. Foster), Mr. Goold, and Mr. Peter Burrowes. It was stated by Mr. Beresford, that in point of trade, the Union

held out greater advantages to the country than had been afforded by the commercial propositions of 1785. He quoted the speeches of Mr. Foster at that time, to show that he was averse to any protecting duties. In reply to this, the Speaker observed, that what he had said on that occasion was in reply to Mr. Flood, who proposed that each country should retain a right of imposing duties to protect their home manufactures. He had opposed this, because it would tend to involve the country in a war of duties. He had said nothing against the continuance of the then existing duties for the protection of Irish manufactures; the difference between the present measure and that of 1785, was that the former protected the manufactures of Ireland, and the latter stripped them of every kind of protection. He maintained that all constitutional questions were finally settled in 1782, and that the negociations of 1785 merely regarded commercial arrangements. Lord Castlereagh expressed his surprise at the *finality* of the settlement of 1782 being again introduced into discussion, and ridiculed the idea that Parliament could bind posterity by any such final settlement.

Mr. GRATTAN said: *Sir*, the noble lord has just made use of an expression, which he will pardon me, if I say is much wanting in respect to this House, and which can only claim indulgence in the consideration of his lordship's youth; I would not say his ignorance. "He hoped he would have heard no more of the settlement of 1782;" but if he gives no better reasons for that hope than he has hitherto done, he must expose himself to hear much more on that subject. The noble lord may also say, I hope to hear no more of Magna Charta, or the Bill of Rights, but the wish of the noble lord will not prevent them from being mentioned. He may say, that the declaration of our rights was an act of phrenzy, the madness of the moment; and he may express a wish to hear no more of it, but I believe the great events of this country will not be put down by so slight a sentence; and if it would not be painful to the noble lord, I would beg leave to remind him that he would have heard much of the settlement of 1782 from his father, who seconded me in the parliamentary transactions of that day.

The treaty of 1782 I consider in a light very different from that in which the noble lord views it; I consider it as absolutely necessary to the peace and good understanding of Great Britain and Ireland; it is the bond of right on the part of this country, acknowledged in the most solemn manner by the Parliament of Great Britain. The Parliament of Ireland did not claim power for itself, but liberty for the people; and it demanded for the Irish community the just right of being bound only by laws enacted by the King, Lords, and Commons, of Ireland. Indebility was the prin-

cipal feature of that treaty, which bound both countries never to re-agitate constitutional points; it went to secure each country from the demands or infringements which might be suggested by moments of strength or weakness on either side, and, therefore, was the pledge of their mutual harmony. It follows then, that the minister, who, by the proposition of a Union, re-agitates constitutional questions, takes advantage of the weakness of Ireland, and, in the basest manner violates the faith, to which England was thus solemnly pledged. The noble lord laughs; — a young man may laugh at an argument which he cannot answer; but the noble lord knows that mine is a sounder policy than his. He may laugh at the idea that two nations should preclude themselves from treating at a future day for mutual advantage; but the only objection to that observation is, that it has nothing to say to the question; the question being, when two nations had judged it for their mutual advantage to form a treaty, a fundamental article of which was that neither should re-agitate constitutional questions, whether one should take advantage of the weakness of the other to revive the agitation of those questions, and, by the assistance of terror and of money to set aside the tenor, purport, and spirit of their former settlement; forcing upon the people of Ireland this measure against their expressed sense; violating the public will; and sweeping away the old inheritance of the land? The treaty of 1782 was founded on the sense of Parliament and people; this Union, if ever taking place, will be in opposition to both. To that treaty, there were in this House only two dissentient voices; to this Union there are one hundred and twenty!

The noble lord applauds the settlement of 1782, inasmuch as it put the Parliament of Ireland into an independent situation, competent to form a Union, that is, competent to give away its own independency. The excellence, then, of the settlement of 1782, according to this argument, was that it qualified the Parliament of Ireland to disqualify itself. He forgets the original rights of this country when he suggests that Great Britain gave the Parliament any rights at that time. No; we derogate from our inheritance and from the original privileges of the realm when we say so. No; the Parliament of England only withdrew a usurpation, and the project of the noble lord is, that the Parliament of Ireland should restore that usurpation by its own authority, in all time to come! The opinions of the cabinets of the two countries have been quoted, as an authority against their own public acts, and the statutes and records of Parliament. It has been said, that they did not

intend any thing final by the settlement of 1782, contrary to the express words of the settlement itself; it has been afterwards admitted that such imputation does not belong to the cabinet, but to one particular member of the cabinet, who appears from certain dispatches, to have entered into a communication without the knowledge of the rest of the cabinet, and in direct opposition to their sentiments; to the measures of his administration, and to his speeches in Parliament. It has been stated and admitted, (for it cannot be denied,) that Mr. Fox knew nothing of the project contained in this minister's dispatch. It has been admitted, that neither General Fitzpatrick, nor Lord Charlemont, nor the Mr. Ponsonby's, nor myself, that is, the Duke of Portland's cabinet, did know any thing of this project.

It has appeared, and I am authorized to read a letter to that purpose, declaring that about the time the dispatch was written which contrived the project, General Fitzpatrick denied, by the authority of government, that any ulterior measure was intended. Who then was the communicant of His Grace the Duke of Portland, on whose authority he thought himself authorized to write such a dispatch? I can tell you who it was not; it was not a gentleman in the cabinet, not in the council, not in the House of Lords, not in the House of Commons, and not in the habits of any confidential political communication with any party in Ireland. On the authority of such a communication, the Duke of Portland appears to have written, in his own hand, his dispatch, unknown to his secretary, or to any of his cabinet. Such a proceeding has been quoted to characterize, not the weakness of this minister, but the proceedings of the Parliament. It is not necessary to take up more of the time of the House upon such a subject. The noble lord has mentioned, that a distinguished law character, (Lord Avonmore), who took a part in the business of 1782, had declared that he had at that time a Union in his contemplation: the secret motives of the heart I cannot presume to investigate, but secret indeed must they have been in this particular instance; because the noble person alluded to, not only never communicated such a sentiment to any of his colleagues, but held a conversation directly to the contrary; and farther, did honour with his name, and company, a society, one of whose fundamental resolutions, was a declaration against a Union. The noble lord has quoted this distinguished person; whether he has quoted him truly I cannot presume to determine, but if so, I must lament his opinion, retaining always respect for his abilities, and regard for his person. The noble lord mentioned, that, after 1782, I spoke, or acted without any disposition of amity towards

England; he is mistaken, without amity to the minister certainly, but without hostility to the nation; a distinction which I will ever make, and which ministers will ever confound. I brought forward two questions respecting Great Britain; one respecting the channel trade, in which we were admitted to be moderate, and by the Irish minister confessed to be right; the second, respecting the East India trade, which proved serviceable, for it was by the agitation of that question we obtained the re-export trade. I may be said to feel too partial towards the constitution of 1782. Yes! I am partial to it! I love the glory of my country, and I never saw this House or that country so generally satisfied as on the 16th of April, 1782. The courtier and the patriot, the man of the Castle and the man of the people, all joined in one common adoration of the new-born liberty of Ireland; and in this House and out of this House, no party was to be seen but the proud, the virtuous, and the honoured party of the nation.

The committee then went into an examination of witnesses, on the subject of protecting duties, and the probable effect of the Union on the Irish manufactures, and then they adjourned until next day.

UNION.

SIR JOHN PARNELL MOVES AN ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY TO DISSOLVE THE PARLIAMENT.

March 13. 1800.

ON the 4th, Mr. Ponsonby moved three resolutions; 1st, "Declaring the right of the subject to petition the Parliament; 2d, that during the session, petitions had been presented from twenty-six counties, besides numerous cities and towns against the measure of Union; and 3d, That these resolutions be laid before the Lord-lieutenant, with an address, praying that they be transmitted to His Majesty." The question of adjournment was moved by Lord Castlereagh, which was carried by 155 to 107.

On the 10th, Mr. Ponsonby gave notice, that he would bring forward a resolution on the subject of the Union, and the measure for compensating individuals for the loss of their boroughs, which he conceived was applying the money of the people in order to purchase their representatives. And on this day (the 10th), Mr. Ponsonby not being in his place, Lord Castlereagh expressed a wish to know, whether it was intended to make the motion; for if not, he would move the order of the day. Sir J. Parnell said:

that as Mr. Ponsonby was unable to attend, he would, with the permission of the House, propose the motion which he said was connected with the petitions against the Union, which lay on the table. Lord Castlereagh said, that the motion of the honourable baronet was calculated to trifle with the House. Sir John Parnell conceived that the noble lord should not treat the acknowledged right of the subject with contempt.

Lord Castlereagh then rose amidst cries of order! order! chair! chair! The Speaker observed that no motion was before the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Corry) then moved, "That Lord Castlereagh should be heard," on which the Speaker rose to order. He said, the noble lord had made no motion, nor could the chair be supposed to understand that he intended to make any. After some debate, Sir John Parnell was desired to proceed; he said, that the great majority of the counties of Ireland, had petitioned against the Union, but the voice of the people was disregarded by the minister; that if the noble lord was convinced that the Union was sanctioned by the public will, he could have no objection to his motion; there was a precedent in the case of the Scotch Union, and if, after the adoption of the measure, the public wish appeared to be for the Union, it would stand on a broad and firm basis; for his own part, he had already made a sacrifice to his principles, and to what he conceived to be the will of the people; he was ready to make further sacrifices, if they conduced to the strength of the empire, and the happiness of the country. He concluded by moving, "That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, humbly praying, that he will be graciously pleased to dissolve the present Parliament, and call a new one, before any final measure shall be concluded, respecting a legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland."

The motion was seconded by Lord Corry. It was supported by Mr. Arthur Moore, Sir Laurence Parsons (afterwards Lord Rosse), Major Osborne, Mr. Egan, Mr. Dobbs, and Mr. Dawson. They contended that the respresentatives of the people were not competetent to pass the act of Union, unless instructed to do so by their constituents; they were delegated to execute a trust which they could not violate. In the present instance, the measure, it appeared, was to be carried by force, and against the sense of the people; the consequence of which, would be *sooner or later* fatal to Great Britain. Mr. Saurin *with great ability supported* the motion. He quoted the Scotch precedent, and the dissolution of the Parliament of that county, prior to the Union. He quoted the doctrine of Mr. Locke, to show, that when Parliament enacted laws of this nature, and in direct contradiction to the will of the people, they were not binding, and the right of resistance reverted to the society; and in such an event resistance would be a struggle against usurpation, not a rebellion *against* law. The motion was opposed by Mr. Alexander, *Doctor* Duigenan, Mr. Stanley, Mr. May, Mr. Martin, the *Solicitor*-general, Mr. Daly (afterwards Judge), Mr. M'Clelland (afterwards Judge), Sir John Blaquiere, and Lord Castlereagh, who said, that he

acknowledged Mr. Saurin to be a most able lawyer, but, he must say, that he appeared to be but a young politician; it was necessary to separate his legal from his political knowledge, and to state, that however his professional opinions may accord with the principles of the constitution, his arguments were Jacobinical, and his doctrines were those of Tom Paine.

Mr. GRATTAN said: That the motion of his right honourable friend (Sir John Parnell), and the arguments of his learned friend (Mr. Saurin), were not fairly stated, and not understood by the other side of the House. The appeal proposed was most constitutional; it was most wise, and the sense of the people could not be expressed so well as by representatives recently chosen, because of the communications which must then be had between them. Nothing was farther from being an appeal to primary assemblies; the constituent body would be the umpire, and the established guides of law would direct the judgment of the members. A principle had been chosen perfectly constitutional, and justified by the precedent of Scotland; in fact it was nothing more than the doctrine contained in the message of His Excellency, which clearly shows that the measure of Union was proposed to the House, on the supposition, not of the concurrence of Parliament, but of the concurrence of the people. Having read the message, Mr. Grattan proceeded: His Majesty grounds the measure on the opinion of the people; the same principle was adopted by the minister of Great Britain in his speech of last session, wherein he rests every thing, not on an identification of the two Parliaments, but of the two nations. His learned friend (Mr. Saurin) did not appeal to the mere multitude; his, was not a reference to primary opinion, but to that of the constituent body, to the people legally and constitutionally described, to that mixture of strength and property, which forms the order of the country. The noble lord had stated, as fortifying the project of Union, that nineteen counties were for it; the fact is not so; but the support which he thus assumed must mean something or nothing. If he affected to respect the constituent opinion, let him obey it; let him withdraw his opposition; for on the sense of the people he was directly contradicted. Let him look to the table for proof; there he would see that since the commencement of the session, twenty-seven counties, and numerous cities, towns, and corporate bodies, had petitioned against the measure, and several of those petitions were signed by not less than 120,000 names. What then was the result? Clearly that the sense of the people was not for the measure, and that His Majesty had been misinformed. Parliament was the great council of the

King, and its duty was to instruct him of the truth. It was the duty of the Irish Commons to say to His Majesty, "Much as we prize this Union, and however beneficial it might prove, if adopted in concurrence with the opinion of the people, against that opinion, it would be the most fatal measure that ever wickedness, or folly, or incapacity could advise or accomplish." It was the duty of that House to advise His Majesty to a constitutional exercise of his royal prerogative, that of dissolving the Parliament in order to arrive at the sense of the people, by the election of a new one. If the sense of the people was against the measure, would His Majesty's ministers boldly and distinctly say, that they intended to force it against that sense? If such was not their intention they should willingly embrace the measure proposed by his right honourable friend. It was a sound and safe measure, nor could he see that any disturbance was likely to arise from a dissolution of Parliament; every act necessary to secure the public peace, and to arm the executive government with powers to that effect, had passed the House. The supplies had been granted, the mutiny bill had passed, the martial law bill was agreed to. Under these circumstances the measure was not dangerous; under every consideration it was just, and should have his cordial support.

The House then divided on Sir John Parnell's motion; — Ayes 104, Noes 150; Majority against the motion 46. Tellers for the Ayes, Sir John Parnell and Lord Viscount Corry; Noes, Mr. Stanley and Mr. Martin.

UNION.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS THE RESOLUTIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE UNION.

March 19. 1800.

ON this and the preceding days petitions were presented against the Union from the cotton manufacturers of Cork, the sugar refiners of Belfast, the printers and spinners of cotton manufactures of Belfast, the calico manufacturers of Balbriggen, the merchants of Belfast, the corporation of carpenters of Dublin, the freeholders of the city of Cork, and of the Queen's County. The Union resolutions having been agreed to, it was then moved by

Mr. O'Hara that the chairman (Mr. Annesley) should leave the chair; this was opposed by Mr. Grattan, who spoke as follows:

Sir, — The plan of Union has detailed itself. Still it is the abolition of the Irish Parliament, and the transfer of legislation: on the part of this House a breach of trust, and on the part of the minister of England a breach of faith. The advocates for Union have failed in every thing: first, in their attempt to prove the competency of Parliament to destroy the old, and to impose a new constitution against the sense of the people. They have quoted the instance of Scotland; but there was no compact between England and Scotland, such as our compact of 1782; and the sense of the Scotch electors was taken on the subject of Union by a dissolution of the Scotch Parliament: so that the strength of the case of Scotland is the desideratum of the case of Ireland. They have attempted to produce instances; viz. the succession of the crown, and the change of religion, as if it were the same thing to make law, and to dissolve the law-maker; as if the frame of the constitution were as much the creature of law as the establishments are the creature of law, and law the creature of the law-maker. In these instances the families and persons administering the constitution were changed, but the frame of the constitution continued; the principle on which they have argued, would reduce human right to the two great questions of power and corruption, in breach of trust and contempt of justice. They have attempted to produce authority; viz. the Parliaments of both countries: as if, in a question between two parties, the Parliament and the people, the *ipse dixit* of the Parliament decided the point. However, the Parliament of Ireland have decided the point, and they have decided the point against their power; for they declared, in 1782, unanimously, both Houses, that the right of the people of Ireland to be subject to no laws but those made by King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland exclusively, was the ancient inheritance of the realm, which they could not surrender. They have attempted to quote authorities. Blackstone, who, upon a constitutional subject regarding Ireland, is no authority; for he declared the Parliament of England competent to make law for this country. Lord Somers, who has said nothing on the subject, and Lord Coke, who, if he has spoken decisively upon the subject, has spoken against them; for he has said that one Parliament cannot take away the power of future Parliaments — of course cannot take away their existence. They have been answered by an authority greater than all they have attempted to quote, the great writer of the Revolu-

tion, Mr. Locke, whose express doctrine, and whose repeated declarations, together with the great principle on which his Essay is founded, go to establish that the legislature is a thing in trust, and that the trustees have not in themselves authority to surrender or transfer the same. They have been answered by the great political act of the English nation, as well as by her great political author, namely, the Revolution, where the society, or a large description thereof, authorized by the society, did interfere in consequence of a breach of trust, adjudged to be a violation of the fundamental principles of the constitution, and therefore an abdication of the government. They have been answered by original contract, declared and voted at that time to be the bond between the people and the government; and they have been further answered by this necessary inference, arising from their doctrine, that, according to their doctrine, should the government of France, Buonaparte for instance, be able to corrupt a majority of the two Houses of the British Parliament, that majority is competent to transfer the powers of the British legislature to Paris.

In their attempts to prove this measure to be the sense of the people, they have been equally unfortunate. They relied on that sense at first as their ground of Union. See their debates of the last session — see the King's message on your table. Finding the sense of this House, on the last session, they appealed to the populace against the Parliament: finding themselves on this session more fortunate to incline the will of this House to their projects, they reject the sense, not of the populace, but of the people. They had before thought the Parliament had no sense but in the rabble; and now they maintain that the great body of the people, the community, the electors of the realm, that great comprehensive body which the law calls the Commons, have no sense but in the Parliament. They render the right of petition null and void. They effectually and substantially repeal the operation of one great article, the declaration of right; viz. that it is the right of the subject to petition: for they allege that, instead of attending to his petitions as conveying his sense, you are to look for his sense in the measure adopted by Parliament, against which measure he is petitioning; and, in order to take away any possible authority which his petition either should have on the royal mind or on this House, they set up a ministerial inquisition into his character, and proscribe for certain popular acts — such as Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform, all His Majesty's subjects that took a part in those acts; that is to say, all the Catholics, all the Presbyterians, and a great portion of Protestants; in short, the great bulk of the

community. They in fact proscribe and exclude, not from their right of petition in form, but in substance, from any authority, weight, or utility annexed to that right, all His Majesty's subjects, save only the friends to the Union, their own connection, their courtiers, or their fellows; thus they get clear and dispose of the cities, towns, and six and twenty counties, who have petitioned against the Union.

In their attempt to prove the Union a measure of identification, they have been no less unfortunate; these cities, and six and twenty counties, petitioning against it, remonstrating against it, exclaiming against it, prove that it cannot be a measure of identification. You cannot identify or bind two people together by mere operation of parchment or paper; the will of the parties is essential to marriage, national or personal; between the buyer and the bought, between the oppresser and the oppressed, between the conqueror and the conquered, there can be no identification. This Union, forced against the sense of the people, by terror and by money, would be an act of oppression, of purchase, and of conquest; the means taken to force the Union, render the identification of people impossible; indeed the Union does not profess to be an identification; it is not an identification of executive. You are to have two courts, a viceroy or justices, and their separate establishments, a separate treasury, a separate revenue, with its distinct patronage and expence, and a separate and distinct regulation for trade and commerce; you are to be governed by distinct laws, (what is the martial bill of the other night?) and by a distinct spirit and principle administering those laws. The temper and spirit with which administration speak of the people of Ireland, prove that they think them a different people, of different manners, different views, and different natures, to be governed on different principles. What are those principles? The principles of conquest for the Irish, the principles of hostility for the Irish. Has any one seen the pamphlet of the Earl of Clare on this subject? Nay, even in the instance of Parliament, though there be an identification of legislatures, there is not, as has been proved by a most learned and valuable member of this House, an identification of legislative principle; the principle with respect to England being that of trust and confidence, and the principle with respect to Ireland being that of terms and of jealousy.

As little have they been able to prove that this Union will produce tranquillization; the object of the minister seems to be to get rid of the Parliament, in order to get rid of the opposition: a shallow and a senseless thought. What! when

you banish Parliament, do you banish the people? Do you extinguish the sentiment? Do you extinguish the soul? Do you put out the spirit of liberty, when you destroy that organ, constitutional and capacious, through which that spirit may be safely and discreetly conveyed? What is the excellence of our constitution? Not that it performs prodigies, and prevents the birth of vices which are inseparable from human nature, but that it provides an organ, in which those vices may play and evaporate, and through which the humours of society may pass without preying on the vitals. Parliament is that body where the whole intellect of the country may be collected, and where the spirit of patriotism, of liberty, and of ambition may all act under the control of that intellect, and under the check of publicity and observation. But if once these virtues or defects were forced to act in secret conclave, or in dark divan, they would produce, not opposition, but conspiracy. Hence, the parliamentary storm which shakes the minister, saves the monarchy. How idly have gentlemen argued, who think that all questions will cease because there is no Irish Parliament to agitate them; they will be agitated by the Parliament of the empire, and by the people of Ireland who will have no Parliament, and therefore must agitate them among one another. Catholic emancipation. Gentlemen say that question has ceased; the question of Union has revived it; it is now discussed in the debates of Great Britain, and in the publications of the members of the British Parliament. The question of parliamentary reform; do gentlemen say that will cease? No; the use made of Irish boroughs to procure the Union, and the the inundation of corruption from Ireland in consequence of the Union, the operation of the double establishments playing against one Parliament; the military government of Ireland. All these are great subjects, certain to be agitated. Why should gentlemen imagine that the absence of Parliament should silence great questions, or great grievances? Has India a Parliament? Have the slaves a Parliament? Have the oppressions of India never been agitated? Has the slave trade never been agitated? Yes! all those questions will be agitated; but how? without hope of redress. The irritation will, therefore, be certain, and the remedy desperate. You will be taught by the debates of the imperial Parliament that you have grievances, and you will be further taught by the abortive consequences of these debates, that you have no Parliament to redress them. You will find that to deprive a nation of hope is not the best method to prevent her becoming desperate: and that you, least of all, secure the peace of

your country, by taking away that constitution, which that country had pledged herself to support.

As little have they established the defects of the constitution of 1782, or the ministerial responsibility, and conventual inadequacy, which they allege to be inseparable from the same. They have been answered by referring to the judicial, financial, and military departments, with Irish officers and stamps of authority annexed, all responsible to the Irish Parliament. They have been shown that no English minister can do any thing here but through the medium of an Irish minister, who is answerable to you. They have been shown, that if the country have not all that political consequence that they now, for the first time, desire, it is because she has not the physical consequence which their Union would but ill supply, and would greatly diminish. But they have been shown that this country may have by the constitution all that liberty which is necessary for happiness, and all that power which is necessary for liberty. They have dwelt much upon the conventual inadequacy of the Irish constitution. Here I beg to consider its fact as well as its theory.

The direct powers of the House of Commons are much, but the indirect are every thing; the purse has drawn the action of the executive here; the minister is that person whom the King has appointed, and the common support; he is constituted minister by His Majesty, but he continues minister only as he enjoys the confidence of Parliament; he is ultimately responsible to Parliament, but in the mean time he takes care to act with her previous or concomitant council.

Let us apply this doctrine to Ireland, by adverting not to what may happen, but to what actually has taken place. You obtained a free trade, how? By your command over the purse of the nation; and yet at that time your grant was not four hundred thousand a-year additional supply, and the King had an hereditary revenue considerably more, and the Parliament of England voted your army; and now, when when the King has no hereditary revenue, and the Parliament of England does not vote your army, and when you grant more than five-fold of what you granted then, do you imagine you will not be able to secure objects which are to England ten-fold less interesting; namely, participation in her treaties? But the experiment has been tried; the Methuen treaty; French treaty; and the American treaty. All these were open to you as matter of course; it is therefore contrary to experiment as well as to theory, to affirm that the constitution of Ireland is incompetent to secure to the people

of Ireland a participation in English treaties; and the truth is, that this Union is propounded, not so much from a sense of our constitutional weakness, as from a dread of our constitutional power. The English minister is jealous of Ireland; he wishes to make the business of influence more compendious; he thinks it more easy to govern by patronage one Parliament than two; he has produced a correspondence which shows you how reluctantly, as far as concerns some of the ministers of England, our constitution, was acknowledged even in the moment of our strength, and now he proposes a measure, showing with what avidity it is to be snatched away in the moment of our weakness. Let them produce what arguments they please. Let them throw over their proceedings what veil or colour they can devise, still is the case apparent. You recovered your liberty in the day of your strength, and the British minister takes it away in the day of your weakness.

The advocates of the Union have failed in that part of their argument which relates to commerce even more than any other. Instead of promoting your manufactures, to compensate for the loss of your Parliament, they tell you now that it is of very little consequence whether you have any manufactures or not; they tell you it is of very little consequence where the manufactures of the empire are disposed, and that if England be more formed for the cotton manufacture, &c., that manufacture and the others should reside in England exclusively. We conceived at first that the manufacturer was to be the great object of those who promoted the Union; we now find that it is the consumer. In short, that idea of converting this country into a land of manufacturers to atone for the loss of a resident gentry is abandoned, and we are now to have neither a resident gentry nor manufacturers; all the policy of nursing our growing fabrics, and thereby of improving the industry of the country; employing her children and expending her wealth upon her own labour, is now abandoned, and the language of the Union is, buy where you can and as cheap as you can, and if the English market be cheaper, resort to that market in preference to your own; accordingly, it is proposed to reduce the protecting duties in seventy instances, to 10½ per cent. for the next twenty years, and after that to reduce them to nothing; observe that this injury, or at least this danger, is the great *bonus* for the Union: you are called upon to declare, that the high duties under which those manufactures have flourished, has not only been an injury to your commerce, but so great an injury, that you should get rid of

your Parliament, in order to get rid of those duties; you are called upon to declare, contrary to experience, that your manufactures have been prejudiced by those high duties; you are called upon to declare, contrary to evidence, that your manufactures can flourish hereafter without them; and you are called upon to declare, supposing those duties to be mischevious, that they cannot be reduced by your own Parliament. Never was a proposition so audacious, to call upon a country to give up at the same time her constitutional and her commercial securities, and to inform her at the same time, that she is to make such a surrender, with a view to enlarge her liberty and her commerce; the cotton manufacturers have got a respite, a few years are allotted to them to withdraw their capital from the trade to save themselves, but not the country, a decisive proof of the ruinous consequence of the measure, and how little the commerce of Ireland was in its consideration. You have heard the testimony of certain manufacturers; you have heard what capital they have laid out, what a number of men they have employed, how their manufacture has flourished since the constitution of 1782, and what ruinous consequences they apprehend from the Union. Against their testimony, you have heard nothing but the calculation of ministers, who do not understand the subject, and who, if they did understand the subject, are parties for Great Britain. Thus, against experience, against evidence, you are called to act in a case, where, if you commit a false step, you can never recover it; if these alterations in your duties were necessary for your interest, they had been proposed before this to your own Parliament, who was and is perfectly competent to administer redress, but they were not propounded since the time of the propositions to your own Parliament, because, till now, the commercial interests of this country, and the country herself, had weight and strength. In the moment of your weakness do they come before you, when you are equally unable to defend your trade and your liberty; for the injuries done to both, the project of Union proposes a compensation in revenue; England, it states, is to pay for your establishments in peace and in war. A mischief which has not befallen the British empire for near a century; England is to buy, and Ireland is to sell the Irish constitution, and the empire of Great Britain and the freedom of Ireland are to be the victims; the empire is to lose what she wants, revenue; and you are to lose what you hold invaluable, constitution. When England communicates to Ireland the blessings of her trade, as in 1779, she lost nothing; she added to the stock of common

industry; but when England parts with revenue, she loses what she gives, and you lose more than what you get; the idea, therefore, is inadmissible, the offer fradulent. It is founded upon two principles, both of which are false; first, that the revenues of the country will not increase; second, that the expences of the country must. As to the first, they say Ireland will be no longer able to support herself, either in peace or war. In the last twenty years the revenues of Ireland have increased near four fold, under the constitution of 1782. If they are to decline under the Union in the next twenty, what becomes of the national prosperity which is promised to flow from the Union? Either their promise is true, and the Union will increase the means of the country, and then what becomes of their argument? Or their promise is false, and the Union will diminish the means of the country, and then what should become of their Union? So that they must either give up their argument, or give up their measure.

Let us see, however, what is this tremendous bankruptcy with which we are threatened. The revenues of this year they have stated to be 2,300,000*l.*, and the new taxes to be three hundred more, making together a net annual income of 2,600,000*l.* Now the last peace establishment was not above 1,000,000*l.*, and the interest of the debt is not above 1,400,000*l.*, as they have under-rated the revenues of the country, so they have over-rated her establishments; and they have estimated her future peace establishment at 1,500,000*l.*; they have increased, according to this estimate, the peace establishment one third, for which they have given no adequate reason: they say the pay of the army has been augmented; that there will be a certain increase of expence in peace, in consequence of the militia, and also in consequence of the yeomen admitted: but these three items will not amount in peace to the difference of 500,000*l.* They have not attempted to produce any estimate to show that they will, nor can they; therefore when they call upon you to acknowledge such a peace establishment, they call upon you for an opinion without any data or foundation whatsoever. The expences of militia and yeomen in peace, which they talk about, but do not state, should produce a proportional reduction of the army, unless they propose, as I suspect they do, to make the establishment a military government, and to throw into this country a great proportion of the army of the empire: and they do hint, indeed, that your peace establishments must be 1,900,000*l.*; and that you are not to have 12,000 regulars

as formerly, but 20,000 effective regular troops. Thus, they propose a war establishment in time of peace, as they have proposed a rebellion establishment in time of war; and form the estimate of their permanent establishments on the estimate of a permanent rebellion. They have already stated the productive effects; and now they state the tranquillizing consequences of a Union — permanent disaffection — permanent military government. A minister states, that he cannot administer the country according to the established constitution, or upon any revenue which the country can afford; and you are to make him a present of the Parliament, and replace it by troops. Thus the Union, when it details itself, becomes a self-convicted measure. The projector tells you a military government and a military force, which the country will not be able to pay, and which Great Britain must, in order to keep down those discontents which follow the Union. I do acknowledge, that some few years after the war, it may be necessary to keep up a certain unusual force in Ireland. I do not know that it will; but if it should, I would consider such force the establishment of expediency and not of permanency. It should be considered, like the martial law bill, or repeal of the Habeas Corpus bill, measures of the moment; and as those laws are not to be considered as your permanent constitution, so neither should that force be considered as your permanent establishment.

With respect to the war establishment, the project holds out the saving of a million; on what grounds I cannot see; but let us proceed on the noble lord's calculations as if they were right; what will be the amount of that saving? His statement of the war establishment he cannot apply beyond the present war; you can collect something like a wish that the statement should be extended still farther, but nothing like an argument. Let us suppose, then, the present war to last for three years; for one you have provided already; in the remaining two you will, according to him, save two millions; but you are to pay for the purchase of boroughs, 1,500,000*l.*: so that your net saving for the surrender of your Parliament will be 500,000*l.* only. But this gain is founded upon a supposition that the noble lord's statements are right, and that the annual supply now voted is a million more than the annual contributionary supply projected; but his annual contributionary supply he states to be 4,492,000*l.* English, and the supply voted this year is 4,652,000*l.* Irish; so that his saving in time of war seems to be a perfect delusion. If you look back, you will find that, upon his principle of contribution we should,

in the present war, taking into consideration the taxes on exports and on income, and the permanent taxes raised this war in Great Britain, have raised, in addition to our former supplies, the annual income of above 2,000,000*l.* a-year. Looking to the present moment, you see that you save nothing; and, looking prospectively, you see you pledge yourself to a principle of expence which is indefinite. You are to pay, I think he says, 4,400,000*l.* English in time of war, unless England should raise her expence, and then you are to raise yours along with her. Let us, however, take the Irish contribution, and 4,492,000*l.* English; I should be glad to know whether this is to be expended on troops kept within the country or not? If on the former, it is a very bad disposition of the force of the empire, which cannot be justified but by rebellion and invasion, or the apprehension of both, and therefore never can be considered as the permanent application of His Majesty's forces. If the latter, that is, if the money be to be expended on troops serving out of the country, how will you ever be able to bear so great a drain in addition to all your others; the drain of the absentees; the drain of the additional absentees; the drain of money paid for the interest of additional debt, and now the drain of the Irish contribution expended in other countries; so that, according to this plan, an invasion, or the apprehension of invasion or rebellion, are the only means to prevent bankruptcy. In every shape I view this question, it is mischievous; and not less mischievous as the extinction of the Parliament of Ireland, than as the corruption of the Parliament of Great Britain. You reduce your Commons by two-thirds; and you make the minister a present of the other; you calculate upon an immense Irish establishment in war, and an increased establishment in peace; thus you increase greatly the sources of influence, while you diminish the number of the persons on whom that influence is to operate: you keep up all the Irish establishments so augmented together, with all the establishments of Great Britain, and leave the double cause to operate on one Parliament.

The British House of Commons resolved some years ago, that the influence of the Crown had increased, and ought to be diminished. I understand it has considerably increased since. Some years ago, the number of placemen and pensioners in the Irish House of Commons were one hundred and ten; since that time the influence of the Crown has greatly increased in Ireland; and, according to the plan of Union, the peace establishment is to increase one third, and the military establishment infinitely beyond any thing known in former wars. Thus, in addition to an influence which

both countries felt to be truly alarming, and one country, in the resolutions of her representatives, declared to be so, do we see a vast accumulation formed, and forming to act on the reduced numbers of one legislature, thus rendered more compendious for the corruption of the minister, as the corruption of the minister is rendered more comprehensive, and more decisive in the legislature; so that you lay a train for the downfal of the constitution of Great Britain, by the surrender of your own, whether you look to the military government, which is likely to take place in Ireland, to support this act of power, for such I must call the Union, or to the tides of patronage, which are to accompany this act of power, and, to add to terror the force of corruption, in conjunction, against the cause of liberty.

I have mentioned the contributionary aid which is to follow this Union. I beg to consider, upon what proportion that contribution is founded. The noble lord who introduced the Union states it to be as two-fifteenths, or as a seventh and an half, but the grounds on which he formed his proportion, I own, do not satisfy me; his principle ground was a comparison of the respective exports and imports of the two countries, and he estimates the imports and exports of England on an average of the three last years, at 73,000,000*l.*, and those of Ireland at 10,000,000*l.* and something more. Mr. Pitt, in his calculation for his income tax, stated them at above 80,000,000*l.*, and on that trade which was actually ensured, and we must suppose much that was not ensured. The noble lord has understated the export and import trade of England; he is also erroneous, inasmuch as he does not include tonnage, the proportion of which is beyond all comparison in favour of Great Britain. In the trade between Great Britain and this country, the tonnage and freight is almost entirely British; valuing, therefore, the imports from Great Britain to this country, as a part of our trade, we ought to value the freight as her wealth, not ours, and it ought to be added to her export. He does not include in his estimate 1,000,000*l.* (it is a great deal more) imported into England to pay the absentees their rents from Ireland, and 4,000,000*l.* from the West Indies. He does not include in his plan of valuation of comparative wealth by trade, the internal commerce of the two countries, which is to Great Britain a greater source of wealth than any other, and which, when we consider that Great Britain is in possession almost exclusively of her own markets, as far as relates to her manufactures, bears a prodigious proportion, we may presume, to the internal trade of Ireland. He says, that it is difficult to

obtain any knowledge on that subject; which would be a good reason for rejecting the Union, when so necessary a knowledge was impossible; but the fact is, Mr. Pitt, in his speech on the income tax, has obtained knowledge on that subject, at least knowledge enough for the purpose of taxation; and he states the value of the internal trade of his country to be 120,000,000*l.* There are other things of less consequence, but, however, of consequence notwithstanding, which he omits to state; for instance, he omits to state the profits of mines, minerals, timber, and shares in canals, which exist in Ireland in a very small degree of comparison, and, which are rated to produce in England 3,000,000*l.* per annum. From all this what do I conclude? Not that the proportion of the wealth of Ireland is this quantity or that quantity, but that he has not given you any data whereon to conclude that the proportion of wealth in the two countries is the contribution propounded, viz. two fifteenths, or one seventh and a half; on the contrary, I think you may safely say, that he over-rates you in contribution, as he overcharges you in establishment.

On the whole, it remains then for us to reject this measure; it is a dishonourable measure; it is an insulting measure; it is a faithless measure; the commercial interest cry out against it; the spirit of the country and her constitution cry out against it; witness the petitions of different descriptions of men of all religions, who seem now to forget their differences, and only to remember their danger. I might here appeal to the different branches of the constitution, which you are going to devote. To the Lords; will they burn their robes, overset the throne, disgrace their ancestors, disqualify their blood, and consent to become slaves with nicknames, instead of peers with privileges? I might appeal to the Commons; will you who remember the business of 1782, before the grave has closed on all the persons concerned in that great event, and when the hearse is but just returned from depositing the remains of some of them, will you violate yourselves, violate the obsequies of our dead general *, and renounce publicly, and deliberately, and for ever, your constitution and your renown? I might call on you by all the good laws you have established, the commerce which you have freed, and by those manufactures which appear from the evidence lately produced at your bar, to have grown like so many children under the providence of a free constitution. I might call on you by those measures of coercion which you lately adopted, and which the most vehement assertor of power never at-

* The Earl of Charlemont.

tempted to justify, but inasmuch as he thought them the means to preserve the Parliament and constitution. Do not now scandalise your own professions on that occasion, as well as renounce your former achievements, and close a political life of 700 years by one monstrous self-surrendering, self-debasing act of relinquishment, irretrievable, irrecoverable, flagitious, and abominable. I might appeal to the King, whose royalty is the auspicious birth of a free constitution. Let him not suffer any minister to profane the mild blood of the House of Hanover, or to sink his illustrious house to the level of other kings by corrupt and unconstitutional victories obtained over the liberties and character of his subjects. I might appeal to the spirit of loyalty itself against this measure of Union. I mean that loyalty which distinguishes the people of these islands; other nations are slaves, but they are subjects. Do I mean that loyalty which is attached to the person of His Majesty? No; but that loyalty which is attached to the person of His Majesty, with all the constitutional circumstances which surround it; that pride of privilege, that love of liberty, and that tenacity of public honour; this it was, which in former times sustained British liberty at home, and her arms abroad; it was not discipline alone, for the armies on the continent are at least as well disciplined; it was not courage alone, for that your enemies possessed in common with the rest of mankind, but it was the spirit of a free constitution sustaining that courage, and that discipline, which made every soldier in the line, with but sixpence in his pocket and one shirt to his back, conceive himself the integral part of a free state, and a conscious proprietor of the great charter. It was this, that in former times, drove old Bourbon in battle; it was this that made His Majesty's subjects, men, not slaves; and it is this, which you are going in Ireland, along with the constitution, from whence it emanated, to extinguish for ever.

I conclude, in these moments, they seem to be the closing moments of your existence, by a supplication to that power whom I tremble to name, that power who has favoured you for 700 years with the rights and image of a free government, and who has lately conducted you out of that desert, where for a century you had wandered, that he will not desert you now, but will be pleased to permit our beloved constitution to delay a little longer among us, and interpose his mercy between the stroke of death and the liberties of the people.

The motion that the Chairman do report the resolutions was opposed by Mr. George Ponsonby, Mr. Saurin, Mr. J. C. Beresford, Major Osborne, and the Speaker (Mr. Foster), who said that every

step which had been taken confirmed him in the opinion that by every article Ireland would be injured. He examined the article which provided, that when the separate debts of each kingdom should be liquidated, or the respective values of the debts to each other should bear the same proportion as their respective contributions, (namely, seven and a half to one,) that then the system of common taxation would commence. He proceeded to show that, from the rapid increase of the debts of both countries, Ireland would soon cease to have the benefit of that proportion. He denied that the present articles of Union could be compared to the commercial measures of 1785: those propositions had for object, not the removal of existing duties, but the reduction of British duties to the rate of Irish; and, at the same time, to put an end to the system of hostile duties altogether. But the present measure reduced all duties to 10 per cent., and removed from sixty or seventy articles all duties whatsoever. He instanced the case of the regulations adopted by a resident Parliament in favour of Irish breweries: by the protection afforded them, the importation of British beer had been diminished. On an average, for four years, ending in 1794, the importation amounted to 106,000*l.*; in 1798, 54,000*l.*; and in 1799, only 25,000*l.* Under the present articles, printers and booksellers would suffer in a similar manner: drapery, cottons, saddlery, &c. would likewise suffer. In short, the Irish manufactures must fall in consequence of the Union. He asserted that the country was against the measure in spirit and sentiment. Ministers were taking advantage of the weakness of the nation. The late disturbances might have been much sooner suppressed than they were, but government had suffered them to go on, and now an unfair advantage was taken of them: in fact, the measure of Union was forced upon the country. The principle of *divide et impera* was acted upon; the Protestant was set against the Catholic, and the people against the Parliament. The place bill which was intended to secure the independence of Parliament, had been turned into a destructive engine by the government. The peerage was used by the minister to bribe the members; and the country was overwhelmed by a military force; such was the statement which the future historian would make.

On the other side, the motion was supported by *Mr. H. Alexander, Sir John Blaquiere, the Chancellor of the Exchequer* (Mr. Corry), *Mr. Robert Johnston* (afterwards Judge), the Prime Sergeant (Mr. St. George Daly, afterwards Judge), and Lord Castlereagh, who replied to the Speaker, and read part of his speech on the propositions, to show that it differed from his present sentiments. He argued at length to show the advantages which, in a commercial point of view, would result from the proposed measure; the peace of the country would no longer be hazarded by the discordant political system of that gentleman and his new friends, or of another set of men who supported the theory of reform and emancipation, or by those who would maintain a separate legislature with a Protestant government. The Union would quiet such a jarring system.

Mr. GRATTAN complained, that the noble lord had in his speech, alluded to the gentlemen who sat round the right honourable member (the Speaker), and who supported him in this measure, in terms so pointed, that the persons meant by the noble lord could not be mistaken; he had charged them with having entertained designs subversive of the constitution. As the noble lord had wandered from the region of argument into the region of personality, he had no objection to follow him. [Here Lord Castlereagh explained, that what he said was, that the measures pursued by those gentlemen, appeared to him to have a tendency to the separation of the two kingdoms.] Mr. Grattan then said: the noble lord knew best what he had spoken, and he was happy to find that he did not impute designs subversive of the constitution, either to him or the gentlemen with whom he acted, either then, or upon any former occasion. But the noble lord had censured those gentlemen, for supporting those very measures which he himself had before supported; he had himself voted in that House in favour of parliamentary reform; he had voted in favour of other popular measures; he had since quitted the society of the gentlemen with whom he had formerly acted, and changed it for one, though perhaps more profitable, yet not more honourable. Mr. Grattan then read some proceedings of the Northern Whig Club, of which Lord Castlereagh had been a member, which were strongly in favour of parliamentary reform, and whereby he had pledged himself to obey the direction of his constituents, from which he argued the inconsistency of the noble lord's conduct on the present occasion.

He also read an account of a public dinner, at which the Honourable Robert Stewart (Lord Castlereagh), presided as chairman in July 1790, at which the following toasts were drank. "Lord Charlemont and the volunteers of Ireland." "Mr. Grattan and the illustrious minority of last Session of Parliament." "Prosperity and everlasting independence to Ireland." "Equal liberty to all mankind." "Whig clubs of Ireland." "Our sovereign lord, the people."

Lord Castlereagh said, he had not intended any thing personal to the Speaker, he admitted that he had pledged himself to support parliamentary reform, but that was before the Roman Catholics had been admitted to the elective franchise; after that the question had assumed a new aspect; he admitted that on his election for the county of Down, he had attended a meeting of the Northern Whig Club, and that he had signed the resolutions that had been read; he denied that his conduct was inconsistent,

or that he had violated any promise which he had made to his constituents.

The committee divided on the question, "That the chairman do report the resolutions;" Ayes 154, Noes 112; Majority 42. Tellers for the Ayes, the Prime Sergeant (Mr. St. George Daly), for the Noes, Mr. O'Hara.

The House then resumed, and the question was put, "That the report of the committee be received on Friday next," on which the House divided; — Ayes 154, Noes 107; Majority 47. Tellers for the Ayes, Colonel Martin, and Mr. H. Alexander; for the Noes, Colonel Foster and Mr. Plunket.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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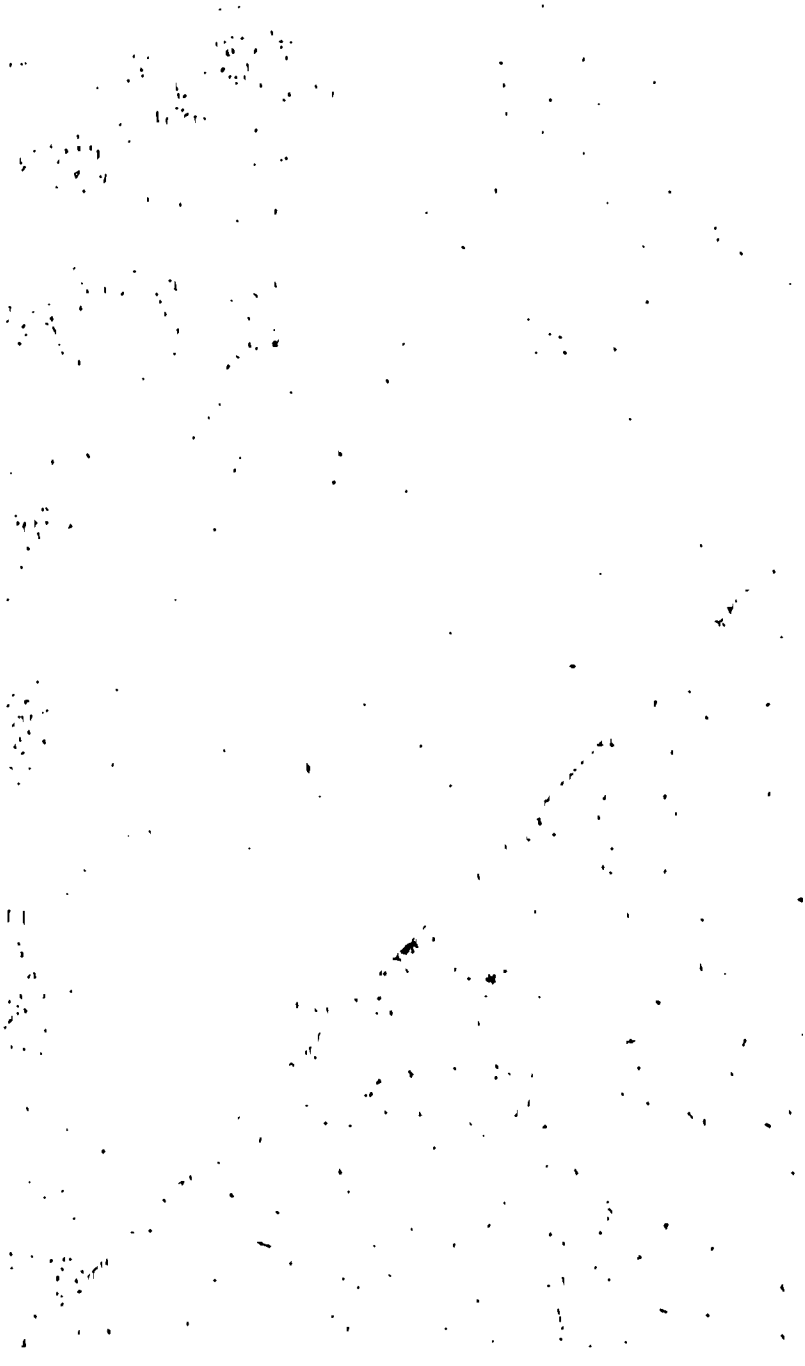

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